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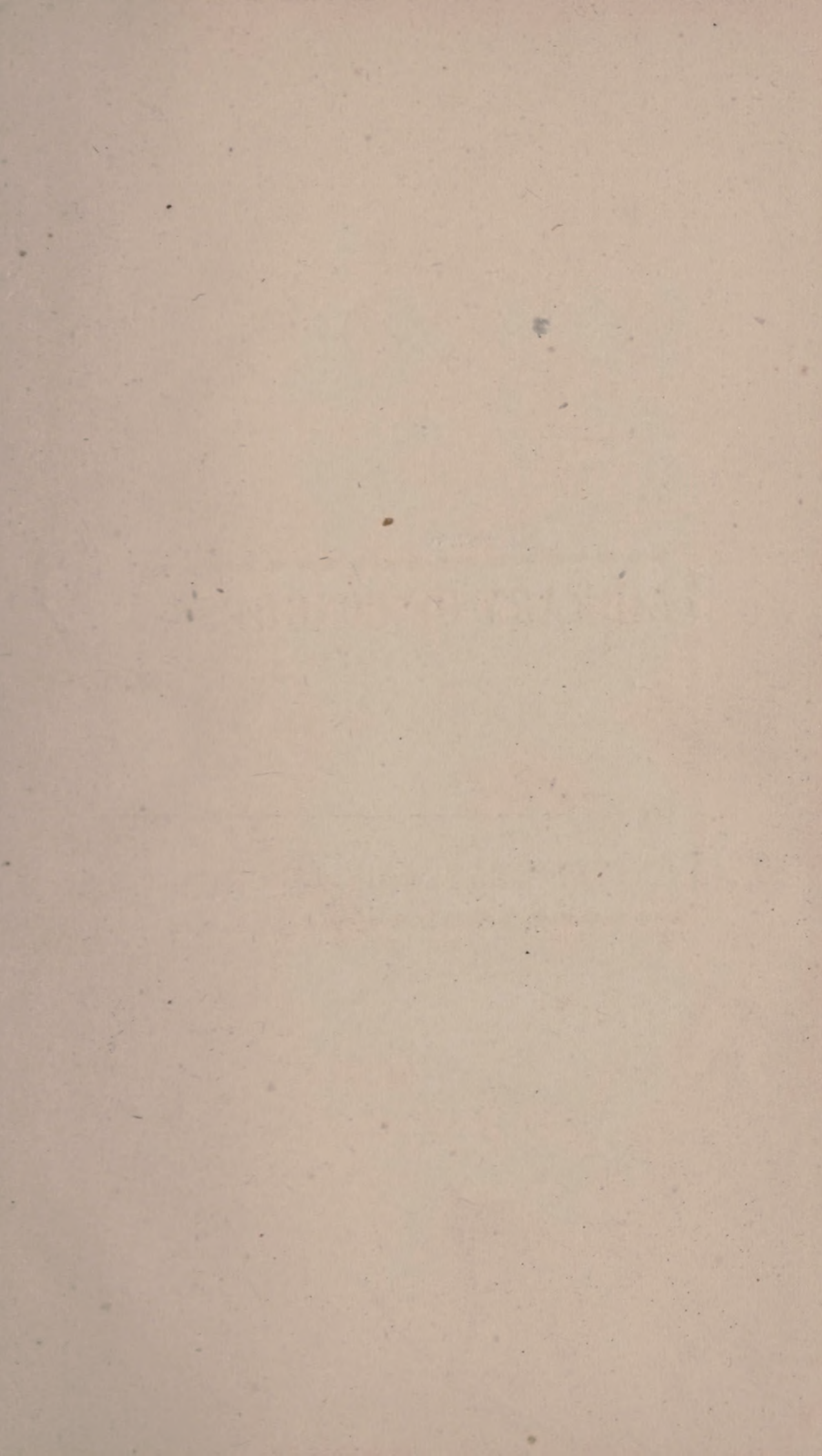
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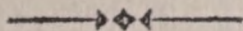


AUGUSTINE;

OR,

THE MYSTERIOUS BEGGAR.

FROM THE FRENCH OF ADRIEN LEMERCIER.



NEW YORK  
D. & J. SADLIER & CO.,  
31 BARCLAY STREET.

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# AUGUSTINE;

OR,

## THE MYSTERIOUS BEGGAR.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE MYSTERIOUS BEGGAR.

**T**OWARDS the close of the last century, a beggar established himself at one of the gates of an important city in Germany. He was commonly called *Old Augustine*. Seated at the foot of a linden-tree from one year's end to the other, his head always uncovered, in the greatest cold of winter as in the fiercest heat of summer, he begged his daily bread with a touching humility.

He could not be classed with ordinary



beggars ; for his manner of asking alms was entirely different from that of other poor persons. He said nothing, much less seeking by importunate demands to exact charity from the public. He contented himself with holding out his old hat to the passers-by, and he waited patiently till some generous hand would place therein some offering. It was only when he felt himself pressed by want that he cast upwards an appealing glance.

But what most distinguished him from others of his class was that, instead of being joyful when the day's receipts were good, he appeared graver than usual. The less he received, the more contempt which accompanied the alms bestowed on him, the more contented and grateful he was towards those who thus manifested their disdain.

When the alms were more than usually abundant, or were beyond his wants, he divided them amongst the other beggars, and kept for himself only what was strictly necessary to prevent his dying of hunger.

For ten years Augustine had come every day to his place beneath the linden-tree, and the common people no longer paid any



attention to him. But men who felt for the misfortunes of others always stopped before him with interest, struck by the expression of his features and the sadness of his look.

Augustine was not more than fifty years of age, but he appeared to be over sixty. His hair, white as snow, fell in long curls over his bent shoulders. On his broad, high forehead was a deep scar, which he carefully concealed under his hair, but which the wind at times uncovered. His black eyes, most frequently moist with tears, told of sorrow; all his features, his whole face, spoke of deep repentance, yet was full of hope. He had lost his right hand, and this, with the wound on his forehead, was sufficient evidence that he had been a soldier. He had no objection to declaring it himself, but no one could ever obtain from him any details of his past life. They only knew that he had come into the country about twelve years before, and that he had lived ever since on charitable alms.

The dwelling which Augustine had chosen was a miserable hut hardly fit to serve as a stable for animals. Situated about half a league in the suburbs of the city, and hid-



den by some shrubs, it escaped all observation. His neighbors only had remarked that it was lit up every night ; but Augustine would never open his door to any one.

The aversion which he evinced for all company led them to suppose that he hated men. Rarely, unless necessity obliged him, would he consent to answer those who sought to talk with him ; then his answers were polite but brief, especially when the questions asked were indiscreet. Very often he maintained an absolute silence, or begged those who sought to know his private life to desist, as he could not satisfy their curiosity. However, from his manner of speaking, and the expressions of which he made use, one could see that he had received an education superior to that of ordinary men, and that the rags which he wore covered something more than a common beggar.

No one, as we have already said, could discover how he passed his nights ; but in the daytime he was seen under the linden-tree, almost always occupied in reciting his rosary, or reading some pious book ; and no noise from the road could distract his



attention, for his piety proceeded from his heart.

Augustine was also distinguished by his fervent piety, and his profound veneration for the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The city at whose gate he begged for alms was for the most part Protestant, as were the prince and nearly all his court. There were no Catholics, with the exception of a few of the citizens, and the inhabitants of some of the neighboring villages. It was just at that unhappy time when a band of infidels were seeking to propagate the fatal errors of modern philosophy.

The history of these later times teaches us with what success these men of unhappy celebrity spread around them their pernicious doctrines, and ended by filling all Europe with blood and with mourning. This poison had crept into the town near whose gates Augustine asked for charity, and had infected not only a great number of Protestants, but many Catholics, who imbibed their impious and disorderly ideas. However, there still remained many hearts devoted to the Catholic faith in all its purity, and the more these faithful souls were



oppressed, the more they attached themselves to Jesus Christ and to his church. Amongst these was Augustine.

Augustine was generally the first to arrive at the church to assist at Mass. He got behind a pillar, in order to be more recollected, and there, humbly prostrate, his eyes cast down, and his hands crossed on his breast, he prayed with the most edifying fervor. When the priest held up the Sacred Host, a holy trembling seized Augustine, his lips quivered, his face lighted up, and there escaped from his breast heavy sighs, as if from a man a prey to the most violent emotions.

Augustine passed whole hours before the Blessed Sacrament when it was exposed to the adoration of the faithful, and very often the sexton was obliged to warn him that he was about to close the doors. He never quitted the church without regret, and, after leaving it, he turned towards it a lingering look, like a mother who separates from her darling child.

He never failed to accompany the priest when he carried the Holy Viaticum to the dying. Barefoot, and with uncovered head,



he followed the pious procession to the house which the Lord honored by his presence, and, arrived at the door, he knelt and prayed whilst awaiting the reappearance of the priest.

Every month he approached the Holy Table. How can we paint the fervor which animated his features, the joy which shone in his eyes, when the priest presented to him the body of our Lord? As the thirsty stag longs for the fountain where he may quench his thirst, so Augustine longed for the happiness of possessing his God, and exposing to him his wants and his desires. Sweet tears then stole from his eyes; his whole being seemed transported with ecstasy.

This tender piety towards the Holy Eucharist attracted to him the attention and esteem of all the faithful, whilst Protestants and some perverted Catholics mocked him, and openly treated him as a fool. Furthermore, these latter gradually withdrew from him the alms which he had formerly received from them, and, but for the charity of the small number of worshippers of Jesus Christ under the appearances



of bread and wine, he would have been a prey to want.

Happily, Augustine was as abstemious as is possible for man to be. In the morning, he took but a glass of water; at noon, a piece of bread sufficed for his repast, and often in the evening he eat nothing. Several persons offered him a shelter; but he always refused, saying that he must and would remain a beggar.







## CHAPTER II.

### PROPHECY OF EVIL.

**O**NE evening, Augustine was seated as usual under the linden. The sun was just setting, and the shades of night began to shed around a refreshing coolness; it was just the time when Augustine usually returned to his miserable dwelling, or went to make a visit to the chapel in the cemetery, and pray for the dead.

He was then on his way to visit that place of repose, when he met by the road three young officers taking a walk. Two of these officers were the sons of the prime minister to the prince, and the third had been their friend from childhood. Profiting by a truce which the government had just concluded with the French Republic, which had already extended its conquests



into Germany, they had then repaired to the capital to rest after their fatigues.

“Ah!” cried one of them, who wore the uniform of a captain, “here is Augustine, here is the saint. My friends, if you feel like laughing, I will make you acquainted with him, and force him to break his accustomed silence.”

“I know him already,” answered another officer, a lieutenant, with a noble though somewhat haughty face; “I never could endure him. There is really nothing in the world more disgusting than an old soldier who has become superstitious and bigoted.”

Augustine, meanwhile, advanced towards them. He had taken no notice of the officers, and, with eyes cast down, and mind occupied with pious thoughts, he was slowly walking on when the captain, obstructing his way, thus addressed him:

“Where are you going in this direction? A devotee like you should not be out of his house at this hour. You are not afraid, then, of the angel of darkness?”

“I am going,” answered the beggar, with a calm, firm voice—“I am going where



you and I shall go one day, nevermore to come forth. I am going to the cemetery."

"Oh! oh!" cried the captain, with a mocking laugh; "if you intend establishing your winter quarters among the tombs, you must go alone. None of us feels tempted to keep you company. Poor fool! put aside these follies, and enjoy a little the rest of your life. A jovial song would become you better than sighs. An old soldier like you should rather seek to be gay than condemn himself to weeping and groaning, like another Jeremiah, over the blindness of those who have the sense to amuse themselves."

"You are at liberty, gentlemen, to amuse yourselves," replied Augustine; "but allow every one to follow his own inclination." And the beggar was about to continue his way.

"Halt there, if you please," said the captain, in an imperious tone; "you must answer me. Is it true that you have served? I can scarcely believe it."

"I do not believe it, either," added the third, who was an artillery officer. "Who knows but you received that wound on



your forehead, and lost your hand, in some tavern dispute?"

"Gentlemen," answered the beggar, visibly affected, "you may have fought bravely on many occasions; but you are yet too young to have known war as I have done. I fought in the Old World and in the New; on sea, and on land; and, when you were yet children, I have often rushed on to the charge and to the attack. I have fought against enemies who gave no quarter, and who devoured their prisoners."

"You boast of it enough," answered the lieutenant; "do you think we are childish enough to believe your vaunts?"

"Truly," answered the captain, with a burst of laughter, "I like to hear him talk of his prowess, it is amusing. I think I see him taken by these cannibals, and the blood freezes in my veins. But tell me, Augustine, is it from them you have learned your lessons of bigotry?"

"Do not blaspheme, I entreat you, gentlemen," continued Augustine, raising his voice with noble pride; "rather humble yourselves before the Lord, whose patience is great, but whose justice is sure."



“Attention, gentlemen,” returned the captain, “now he is going to preach us a monk’s sermon. Well, my old man, begin. You will find in us indulgent auditors, and will perhaps end by converting us.”

“I thank you,” said the artilleryman; “it is rather too chilly to listen to a sermon in the open air. Let this fool visit his dead.”

“Good-by, then, Augustine,” said the captain. “Present my compliments to your friends. Beg of them to prepare me a good lodging for when I shall be tired of life, but not before fifty years.”

“You give me a useless commission,” answered the beggar, in a voice hollow as though it came out of a tomb, and looking the impertinent scoffer in the face. “Useless, indeed,” added he, “for death hovers over your head, and your last dwelling-place in the cemetery is already prepared. Soon will your remains be mingled with those who are now the food of worms. In four weeks you shall be there, not dead on the field of honor, but killed ingloriously, and by the hand of a friend.”

The moon was just rising; her pale light



illuminated the beggar's features, giving him the aspect of an unhappy spirit. His look was so wild, and his upraised hand had in it something so imposing, that the captain could not repress a shudder. He wished to go, but his companions held him back.

At the same moment, they perceived through the trees a faint light advancing towards them ; it was the priest carrying the Holy Viaticum to a dying person. Augustine's eyes shone with a new light, and his gloomy features brightened.

"Hats off, gentlemen !" he said, in a tone of command. "Our Lord is approaching."

The officers appeared completely disconcerted ; they regarded Augustine in speechless astonishment.

"Hats off !" repeated the beggar, in a louder voice. "Prostrate yourselves ; behold the Son of God, the same who will one day summon you before his dread tribunal !"

Overcome by an irresistible emotion, as if urged by a superior force, the officers removed their hats, and bowed their heads before the sacred chalice, without knowing what they did. Augustine fell upon his knees, and received the priest's blessing.



“May the holy Sacrament of the Altar be ever adored and praised!” said he with fervor.

“Amen!” answered the priest, passing on, followed by Augustine.

The officers remained some time mute and motionless.

“O shame!” at length cried the captain, red with anger. “This old fellow has played a pretty trick on us. But how were we such fools as to let him disconcert us so? Patience; I will make him pay dear for it.”

The artilleryman forced himself to conceal his shame and uneasiness under a loud burst of laughter, which, although it was noisy, was none the more sincere. But Lieutenant Count Alfred remained silent; his eyes, gloomy and downcast, showed that the beggar’s words had made a deep impression on him, and thrown terror and affright into his soul.







## CHAPTER III.

### THE PROPHECY ACCOMPLISHED.

**F**OUR weeks passed. Augustine was sitting in his hut reading, by the faint light of a little lamp, from a well-worn book.

Some one knocked at the door. Augustine, deeply absorbed in meditation, did not hear. A louder knock, and a feeble but anxious voice, drew him from his reverie.

“Who comes to trouble me at this hour?” said he, approaching and cautiously opening the window, whilst the wind, which was blowing violently, threatened to leave him in darkness by extinguishing the lamp.

“For the love of heaven,” answered the same voice, which seemed yet more feeble, “open, for I am losing blood, and will perish!”

Augustine hastened to open the door,



and a young man, pale, and covered with a cloak, rushed into the apartment as though pursued by enemies. The beggar looked him sternly in the face for some moments without uttering a word; the young man regarded him with equal attention, and, recognizing him, cried, in accents of the deepest emotion:

“Great God! it is you, Old Augustine, prophet of evil! Ah! your prediction is but too truly accomplished. He is dead, not on the field of battle, by the hand of an enemy, but in obscurity, by the hand of a friend!”

At these words, Augustine appeared to start from a profound reverie. “Yes,” said he, “I remember now that we met before one evening, when you—”

“Hush! hush! I beseech you,” replied the officer, becoming paler and paler; “I am the most miserable of men; I have killed my friend. O Charles! it was then decreed above that I should be your murderer! Woe, woe to me!”

Sorrow prevented him from continuing. Augustine, seeing him on the point of falling, caught him in his arms, made him



sit down on a bench, and bathed his temples with vinegar and water. Then, too, he perceived the blood which was flowing beneath his cloak.

“You are wounded, then?” said he gently.

The young man replied only by an affirmative nod of the head. Augustine undressed him with the greatest care, and examined the wound. A ball had entered the shoulder.

“Should I not go for a surgeon?” asked the beggar; “your wound seems to be serious.”

“No, no,” quickly answered the officer; “he will betray me. But, O my God! where shall I find help? Whom can I trust in my misfortune?”

Augustine regarded him with an air of tender solicitude.

“To me,” answered he confidently. “I offer you my services, unless a beggar’s services might be disagreeable to you. Be discreet, as I shall be. Misfortune which addresses itself to misfortune is always sure of obtaining prompt assistance.”

“Well,” answered the young man, “I



confide entirely in you, and I beg of you to take charge of my cure. My friend Charles, the captain, who, the evening when we met, treated you in so insolent a manner, insulted me also. It was a very trifling thing, it is true ; but you know the prejudices of the world, and the rigorous exactions of military honor. Our quarrel became so serious that he sent me a challenge ; I thought myself bound to accept it. He wounded me in the shoulder, and I, who had hoped that he would spare the friend of his childhood, his playmate, animated by revenge, resolved to grant him no quarter, I aimed at his breast, and my shot stretched him lifeless. Your prophecy, Augustine, was accomplished in a terrible manner ; woe to me ! woe to us all !”

Augustine continued to regard the wounded man with deep pity. The recollection of that night, when he had announced to the captain his approaching end, appeared to him like a shadow from the grave ; for he had spoken as if by inspiration, and he had long since forgotten the words which had so forcibly struck his hearers.



“ My wound burns,” resumed the young officer, in a plaintive tone. “ Augustine, dress it, I beseech you.”

The beggar staunched the blood which continued to flow profusely, and, taking a pair of pincers and a knife from a box, “ Have confidence in me,” said he ; “ let me extract the ball.”

The wounded man looked at him in astonishment, and turned his shoulder to him.

“ But,” asked he, “ are you capable of performing such an operation ?”

“ This operation,” answered Augustine, “ is nothing new to an old soldier ; I have extracted several balls before since I first went to war, and, thanks to God, I have always been so fortunate as to succeed.”

Augustine then set to work, and drew out the ball with an address which showed a profound study of the art and long experience—a thing all the more remarkable that he had but one hand. He then made the young man lie down on his bed of straw, which, although very poor, was yet very clean, and he sat beside him to nurse him.

The sick man passed a bad night ; a violent fever brought on delirium. His ravings



showed the sorrow which filled his soul, and the fear for himself which his crime had inspired. The captain whom he had killed was the eldest son of a powerful and favored minister of the prince. Edward—such was the young man's name—trembled lest revenge should render still more severe the laws of the country against duelling.

The wounded man's anguish revealed itself now by low moans, now by sharp cries. Augustine's tender heart was wrung.

"Unhappy that we are," often repeated Edward in his delirium; "why did we not listen to the voice of heaven? It warned us of the misfortune which threatened us; it sent us a vision to announce it to us, and we were deaf to its warnings. . . . Charles! Charles! forgive your murderer!" . . .

Augustine could not restrain his tears.

"Alas!" said he, "you have reason to weep, unhappy young man, who have exposed your life and your eternal salvation by destroying your friend's body and soul. To die impenitent, without returning to God, without absolution, what a horrible death!" . . .

Next morning, Edward experienced a



little relief, and he added the following details to those which he had related the evening previous respecting his duel :

“ When I was assured that my friend had ceased to live, I wished to cross the frontiers, to put myself beyond the reach of pursuit ; but my wound, which my second had dressed carelessly, prevented me from guiding my horse. No longer obeying the one hand, which was all I could use, he ran away, threw me to the ground, and fled across the fields. I then saw a light which betokened a habitation ; although enfeebled by the loss of blood, and giddy with my fall, I advanced in this direction, and was so fortunate as to find you. . . . But what will become of me ? Charles is son of a man who is the most powerful at court, the favorite of the prince, and in eight days my leave expires. If I do not rejoin my regiment at the end of that time, they will condemn me as a deserter. If, on the contrary, I state the accident which has befallen me, the news of my friend being killed in a duel will make them suspect the horrible truth, and I do not feel the strength to deny it.”



Augustine had not yet satisfied the desire which he felt to profit by the young officer's emotion, and remind him of the great truths of religion. The occasion appeared favorable. Addressing his guest in a gentle tone, which, however, became warm and impressive, he said:

“ You fear with good reason the prince's anger, the revenge of his minister. Yet they are only weak mortals like yourself, and may destroy your body, but they cannot hurt your soul. How much more, then, should you dread the anger of him who commands kings, and who will one day demand from you an account of the blood you have shed? You despair of obtaining your pardon, and society, which you have outraged in one of its members, cannot grant it to you without violating the laws on which it is founded. God alone can be appeased, and you have not yet thought of humbling yourself before him! You have shed the blood of your friend, of your brother, and you forget that his soul, which your arm has sent before the throne of eternal justice, will ask for vengeance on you. ‘Whoever,’ says the Scripture, ‘shall shed human



blood shall see also his own shed, because man is made to the likeness of God.' You are the cause of your friend's dying, perhaps, without returning from his fatal blindness, and being lost for all eternity, and you think only of your corporal welfare, of your flight. Oh ! turn aside, I implore you, turn aside from your errors. Turn towards God before the law gives you up to the justice of men. Implore his pity, ask pardon of him, and perhaps you will obtain your bodily safety as well as that of your soul. Believe a man who has also suffered much in the ways of error, where he wandered long, but who to-day thanks heaven that he was recalled from them. You are a Catholic, I know ; the church offers you pardon in the sacrament of penance. Instead of deploring your misfortune with tears as bitter as they are vain, go to a priest, who will pronounce over you the consoling words of reconciliation ; and when you have returned to the grace of God, you will appear with more confidence before the tribunal of men, unless that, as I hope, the Lord, touched by your repentance, may send you an unlooked-for assistance which will shelter you



from the pursuit of justice. You have deeply offended your God, who hates the murderer, whatever may have been the prejudice by which you were incited to shed the blood of your fellow-creature ; but his mercy is as boundless as man's is limited. If you have destroyed your brother's soul, at least save your own by repentance and the sacraments. If your friend's fate is irrevocably fixed for all eternity, God, in his mercy, has yet left you time to obtain his pardon. It is terrible to think that, by your crime, hell possesses perhaps another victim ; but this thought, far from discouraging you, should excite you all the more to have recourse, with an humble and contrite heart, to the mercy of him who can restore your innocence."

These words found but a feeble response in the young officer's soul. Completely occupied with the danger which threatened him, he thought only of the means of averting the pursuit which would be directed against him, and of the misfortune which had destroyed in an instant his most cherished hopes. Crazed at times by sorrow, he fancied himself sometimes before the



judge; and when his host endeavored to quiet him, he became silent, and remained for whole hours with his eyes fixed on vacancy.

Augustine renewed several times his pious and charitable attempts; but Edward remained deaf to all his remonstrances, and the beggar was obliged to content himself with praying for him whom his words could not touch. He hardly ever left him, and if he still appeared, from time to time, at his accustomed place beneath the lindentree, it was lest his absence should give rise to suspicions, and to avoid the indiscreet questions which he could not answer.







## CHAPTER IV.

### IMPENITENT.



DWARD'S youth and strong constitution, together with Augustine's anxious care, at length triumphed over sickness, which had so long kept the young officer confined to bed. Several times already he had begged his host to find out what was said of him in the city, and if he had been condemned.

“I well know,” would he add, with a gloomy look, “that I have failed in every duty. Our prince has a horror of duels; he has never pardoned any one who has had the misfortune to kill his adversary. Now, above all, when they have none too many arms to repulse a victorious enemy, he will see with sorrow that the army has been deprived of one of its best officers. My leave is expired; my comrades, when they do not



see me return to my regiment, will think that I have concealed myself to escape the dangers of war, and have perhaps gone over to the enemy. Ah ! they will have me condemned to death as a cowardly deserter."

The unhappy young man cursed the day on which he was born, and, refusing all consolation, he listened only to the voice of despair. Brought up like many of his compatriots in the philosophical ideas which had brought so many evils on France, he was wanting in that Christian humility and resignation which relieve all human miseries, and give strength and courage to encounter the greatest trials. Augustine, convinced of the uselessness of his efforts to calm a mind so agitated as was Edward's, consented at length to obtain the desired information.

The young officer's gloomy presentiments were but too truly realized. The prince's anger at the news of the captain's death, and the sorrow of the minister who had lost his most promising son, only added to the rigor of the sentence. Edward had been condemned as a duellist ; and, as he had failed to appear on the day when his



leave expired, the council of war declared him a deserter, and pronounced the sentence of death on him.

Notwithstanding all the precautions which the beggar thought he had taken to announce these sad tidings to his young guest, Edward was none the less affected by them. He turned pale, and, though he only expected that such would be the consequences of his crime, he gave himself up to the most violent despair. "He would rather die a thousand times," he said, "than endure such anguish any longer." Augustine strove by every means to calm him; but time alone could ease his pain and restore his drooping courage.

"You are not lost," said Augustine to him. "You can escape the danger which threatens you. You are here in a safe place, where no one can ever discover you. You should, however, count more on help from above. God is as merciful as he is powerful, and he has never rejected the prayer of an humble heart which has recourse to him with confidence. But he wishes us to implore him; and before bestowing his favors on us, he wishes us to



beg them of him. Of what service to you is your philosophy, with its dry doctrines, which serve at the best to amuse a frivolous mind, but which are powerless to heal a heart broken by misfortune? Ah! return to the consoling truths of religion; they alone can sustain your courage; and even though society should condemn and cast you out of its pale, God will absolve you, and will receive you into his bosom."

After a fortnight of sufferings and of mental torture, which is a thousand times more painful, Edward could at last leave his bed, and move a little round the narrow spot where he was obliged to keep himself hidden. Augustine, seeing him out of danger, returned to his usual mode of life, and was seen every day at the linden-tree begging.

Thus Edward was left alone. Soon weariness seized him, and he fell into mental debility, which, for a disposition so active and impetuous as was his, must have been more cruel than all the sufferings of disease. To employ his leisure, he paced the length and breadth of the room, whose slightest details he examined. The small extent of



the room, and the feeble light which came through one small window, covered besides by a curtain, made it appear to him like a prison. On whatever side he cast his eyes, he saw only poverty and misery. The walls were of oak; but in many places they gave passage to the wind through large crevices.

In one corner stood a small altar, on which were a crucifix and a skull; to the right and left were two pictures painted by the hand of a master, and representing, one the Last Supper, and the other the Virgin with the infant Jesus.

A little table, a broken chair, two dishes, and a pitcher formed the whole furniture. A straw bed was made up at one end of the room, and that served for Edward, Augustine sleeping on the bare ground.

On the altar were some books; they were the Bible and other works of piety. Sometimes, to divert his weariness, Edward would take up one of these books, but with the greatest repugnance; and scarcely had he read a few lines, than he would throw them aside with disdain. Augustine remarked one day the aversion which Edward showed for these pious books.



“How I pity you,” said he, “who cannot understand the love which God deserves! According to you, God is a being so good that he regards with indifference the good and evil which men do, as though his justice was not equal to his mercy. But you misunderstand this goodness of which you dare to take advantage in order to give yourself up at your ease to the inclinations of your heart. Ah! my young friend, pray to the Lord that he may enlighten you with his divine light, and that he may give you that lively faith which alone can save you. Beg him to guide you to the path of truth, as he was pleased to guide me myself; for I, too, have had the misfortune of not having always lived in the love of God.”

Whilst Augustine spoke thus, his cheeks became of a deep red, and his eyes shone with an unusual light. He had Edward's hands in his, and he pressed them with emotion; then he threw himself before the crucifix, and prayed for a long time. Burning tears streamed from his eyes and bedewed his face.

Edward regarded him with surprise and



with an emotion which he had never before felt; recollections of his childhood crowded on his mind, and he mourned the happy moments of his youth, when he was as full of love as of faith.

“I was happier then than I am now,” thought he, looking at the beggar. “Like Augustine, I believed then, and I loved. To-day my mind is vacant and my heart dried up. Poor mother! ah! if you knew how little I have profited by your lessons, and how cruelly I have been punished for having despised the teachings of faith!”

Augustine had finished praying; he arose, and, taking the sugar and lemons which he had just brought from the town, he prepared for Edward a refreshing drink, for which the young officer had been longing.

“Drink,” said he to him; “that will strengthen you.”

Edward took a long draught of it; he then asked the beggar if he had learned any war news.

“The truce,” said Augustine, “is ended. The French have passed the Rhine, and have twice defeated the Germans. They begin already to fear for the capital.”



“Great God!” cried Edward sorrowfully; “O my country! why can I not shed my blood for thee? Ah! how happy my comrades are! It is permitted them to march against the enemy, and to fight for the honor of the nation, whilst I live here as a prisoner, as a deserter, under the horrible accusation of having betrayed my country.”

“The Lord,” replied Augustine, “makes you expiate here the only crime of which you have been guilty, and which appears to make less impression upon you than that of which you are suspected. Poor young man! you remain ever deaf to the voice of heaven, which tries you with so much mercy? If you had fallen into the hands of those whom duty would oblige to enforce the laws, you would have died—and died, perhaps, like the unhappy man whom you have yourself deprived of life, without returning to God, and consequently without hope of pardon. Now, on the contrary, that you have leisure to enter into yourself, and implore the mercy of him who will one day judge you, you allow yourself to be cast down by an unreasonable sorrow, and,



instead of giving yourself up to a salutary repentance, you listen only to the voice of despair. You regret that you cannot shed your blood for your country, and you have not a single tear to offer to God."







## CHAPTER V.

### THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP.

**A**UGUSTINE'S prediction was soon accomplished. The French army penetrated to the capital. After compelling the prince and his court to fly, they established a garrison in the city, and the inhabitants underwent the fate of the vanquished.

A division of German troops attempted to retake the city, but they were repulsed, and Count Alfred, the prime minister's only remaining son since the death of his brother, was taken prisoner.

Some letters which were found on the count seemed to prove that this officer was connected with the enemies of the Republic, and was even implicated in a plot which had just broken out in the heart of France, but which had been defeated.

Nothing more was required to condemn



Alfred to a traitor's punishment, and but for a severe wound which he had received in the last battle, the execution would have immediately followed the sentence. The despair and sorrow of the father at this fearful news may be imagined. He offered anything to save his son's life ; he made use of tears and prayers ; but neither his efforts nor those of the prince could soften the heart of the French general into whose hands Alfred had fallen.

The whole town, informed of the fate reserved for the young officer who had so generously exposed himself to save the city, testified the most lively sorrow ; all saw with terror the approach of the day fixed for the execution. Augustine shared in the general mourning ; but he thought he ought to conceal it from Edward, whom chance, however, made acquainted with all.

Edward already felt himself strong enough to leave the dwelling of his host, and make short excursions in the suburbs. But as he dared not show himself in public, he only went out at night or in the evening. It was in one of these walks that he learned the fate of Alfred by a conversation which



he overheard while concealed behind some bushes. This news awakened in his soul all the sorrow which the death of Charles had caused him, and which Augustine had at last succeeded in calming.

“My God !” said he, in a heart-rending voice, “his unhappy father will soon have no son, . . . and that through my fault ! . . . Ah ! why must I survive Alfred’s misfortune ? . . . May I not die for you, poor Alfred ? May I not restore you to your father ? Perhaps he would pardon me for having deprived him of the first support of his old age !” . . .

Augustine again attempted to console him, but his efforts were vain. Edward could not close an eye all night, and the beggar, who slept beside him for fear he should have need of help, heard him several times utter plaintive moans, and curse the fatal prejudice which had been the cause of his friend’s death. Next day, Augustine prayed longer than usual, and with extraordinary fervor. When he had finished, he arose, and, turning to Edward,

“Take courage,” he said, with a serene face, and in a confident tone. “Soon I



hope to bring you consoling news. I am going to take an important step, but which, I venture to hope, will be blest by Heaven."

Edward would have asked the beggar what he intended to do; but Augustine did not give him time, and, taking his stick, he hastily directed his steps to the city, where he asked for the dwelling of the French general.

Arrived at the door of the hotel, he wished to enter; the sentinels repulsed him with disdain, and Augustine was obliged to wait. A moment after, a staff officer appeared.

"Captain," said he to him in French, "have pity on a poor soldier who served for a long time in the French army, and be kind enough to announce me to your general. Tell him, I pray you, that I can give him news of his friend Felix."

The captain regarded the beggar for some time in surprise, and, after promising to deliver his message, he entered the hotel. Immediately after an orderly came out, who told Augustine to follow him, and introduced him into the parlor where the general was waiting.

"Well," said the general, fixing a pene-



trating glance on the beggar, as though he feared treason, "what have you to tell me of Felix?"

"Louis," answered the beggar, with a slight smile on his lips, "is, then, that Felix, of whom you expect news, so changed that even his friend cannot recognize him?"

"Heavens!" cried the general, stupefied. "Is it, then, you, Felix? Ah! who would have recognized you?"

And drawing the beggar to him, he pressed him to his heart with emotion. The attendants could not overcome their astonishment. In truth, it was a strange spectacle presented by the two friends, one in the prime of life and clothed in his brilliant uniform, the other covered with rags, with pale face and white hair, and both holding each other in a close embrace.

"Felix! Felix!" continued the general, after making a sign to those who were in the parlor to withdraw, and casting a long look of astonishment and compassion on the garb of the beggar, "what has befallen you? I would not have known you. You are as yet but fifty years of age, and your



forehead is already furrowed with wrinkles, and your hair is white."

"Crime and repentance make one grow old early," answered Augustine, and his features expressed a deep sorrow.

"But your garments! Formerly millionaire, and now reduced to beggary. O Felix! my dear friend, tell me how you were brought to such a miserable condition? I entreat you, conceal nothing from me. Tell me all; you will find in me a friend ready to relieve you."

"What I have to tell you is very short," replied Augustine, for so we will continue to call him; "I profaned the Holy of Holies, and I am doing penance in tears and poverty."

"My dear Felix," said the general, drawing him again to his bosom with deep emotion, "come and repose on my heart; confide to me your misfortunes. You know that formerly we shared our joys and our sorrows. I cannot see you weep alone."

"O Louis!" answered Augustine, shaking his head sorrowfully, "leave me my sorrow and my secret. One alone knows it: he whom Heaven has given me to be my guide



and support. My crime was great, but I trust that the God of mercy, touched by my tears, has confirmed the words of pardon and of salvation which his minister has pronounced over me !”

The general could not look enough on the beggar's features, and tears came into his eyes. Then, giving him a seat,

“ Sit down, my friend,” said he ; “ you are too much agitated. Open your heart to me. What can I do for you ? You know that I have never refused you anything.”

“ I know that, Louis, and that is why I address myself to your heart ; not for me, for I have need of the mercy of Heaven alone. My demand will perhaps astonish you ; but your friendship for me can overcome all difficulties. The German Lieutenant Count Alfred, son of the prime minister, is in your hands, and is condemned to death. Grant me his life and liberty.”

“ O Felix ! what do you ask ! The thing is impossible. Ask anything else, your friend is ready to grant it ; but respect his duties and do not force him to betray them.”

“ And yet, Louis, I can ask nothing else. Your duty obliges you to condemn the



criminal ; but, after his condemnation, you have also the power of pardoning him, and it is his pardon I solicit. Consider that he is the only son of a father who has committed no other crime than the defence of his country, and who has just lost his eldest son by a tragical death."

"It is true, Felix, but remember the young man's crime. According to our laws, he must be condemned to death ; he could not even enjoy the privileges of a prisoner of war. His prince has already offered me several French prisoners in exchange ; I was obliged to refuse them, for an example must be made which will terrify the enemies of our Government, as well those who conspire in the interior of France, as those *abroad* who are in communication with them."

"Since our Lord has granted me grace to renounce all my worldly hopes, and devote myself to penance, I have also ceased to occupy myself with any of the revolutions which have arisen since that time, and I have contented myself with praying for the success of the cause of religion. Listening only to the voice of charity, which ordains



that we do good to our fellow-creatures, I come to entreat you to have pity on this unhappy young man, and to restore him to his father."

"Indeed, I cannot, my friend. That is beyond my power; friendship must yield to justice. I have refused all the offers of the prince and his minister; it is impossible for me to withdraw my refusal."

"Louis," continued Augustine, with a look full of sorrow and tender reproach, "am I not, then, dearer to you than the prince and his minister? There was a time when you would have given your life for me, and to-day you refuse me the life of a man who is a stranger! I again repeat that I ask nothing which is contrary to your duty: I ask only the pardon of a criminal, without therefore wishing to judge of the sentence which was passed on him; for I have renounced politics, and I have made a vow to occupy myself no more with the things of the world."

Louis dared not raise his eyes, so much did he fear to meet the beseeching glance of his friend; but, by his silence, Augustine knew the fruitlessness of his entreaties.



Nevertheless, he did not lose courage ; and pushing back the hair which covered his forehead, said :

“ Do you remember, Louis, when we were together on the banks of Lake Erie? Do you remember this wound? It was given me by the tomahawk of an Indian whose companion I had slain when he had thrown you down. Do you see this arm, Louis? It wants a hand, which I lost in defending your life. Do you remember the oath which you then took? ”

These words struck the general. Arising quickly, and embracing his friend with deep emotion, he said :

“ O Felix! how can you think I have forgotten it? No! no! I would be the vilest of men if I could forget your devotedness. I grant you this young man's life, since I neither should nor could refuse you anything ; but tell him that it is to you alone that he owes his life.”

“ He shall know it ; for on his life depends that of another who is very dear to me, and whom he alone can save in his turn. His brother has just been killed in a duel. His murderer is also condemned to



death, and I wish to obtain his pardon. The count cannot refuse me when I entreat him to solicit for this other unhappy young man a favor which I have been so happy as to obtain for himself; and his father will be obliged to pardon him."

Louis understood his friend's generous intention; he begged him once more to reveal the mystery which enveloped his singular existence; but Augustine persisted in his refusal.

"My sorrow," said he, "must remain a secret; besides, the world would not understand it. It dates from the period when I bade you farewell in leaving America."

"Tell me, at least, where I can find you."

"Under the linden-tree outside the New-Gate. It is there I beg."

The general turned aside to hide his tears.

"Are you in need of money?" continued he, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"No; you have given me all that I could desire, and I ask no more than a place in your memory and your friendship."



“No one is so well entitled to these as you. It is to your devotedness that I have several times owed my safety.”

“I have saved the life of your body; but can I also secure that of your soul? But I will pray for you, so that the God of goodness may enlighten you with his light, and guard you from the fatal errors which have disordered all minds, and plunged our beautiful country into this abyss of evil, from which Providence alone can withdraw it.”

The general then placed himself at his desk, and began to write; when he had finished, he rang. An adjutant entered.

“Go to Count Alfred,” said he to him; “announce to him that I accept the exchange proposed by his prince. When they send me the three French officers who were taken in the last affair, and of whom they spoke, he will be immediately released. Here is his passport; but tell him also that he owes his life and liberty to the beggar Augustine.”

The adjutant was overcome with surprise at the sight of this poor ragged man, who had more influence over the mind of



the general than the German prince and the most powerful persons of his court.

“Felix,” resumed the general, “you will come back to see me again. I demand that of your friendship.”

The adjutant, after having taken the paper which the general presented to him, went out with Augustine to repair to the prison where Count Alfred was expecting only death.

The count was surprised to see the adjutant accompanying Augustine. He remembered the evening when his brother, his friend, and himself had met the beggar on the way to the cemetery, and this recollection troubled him. But he recovered himself almost immediately, and, fixing his eyes on Augustine,

“I see,” said he, “that all is over with me. Here is the prophet of misfortune who predicted my brother’s death, and who is probably coming to announce mine.”

“You are mistaken, sir,” replied the adjutant, with a mysterious air. “No ; it is not death : it is liberty and life which I bring you. Here is the proof that the general has pardoned you. You are going



to be restored to your prince, in exchange for three French officers lately taken."

"O my father!" cried the prisoner, transported with joy. "I shall see you again, and you shall not have lost both your children. But to whom do I owe this happiness, for which I no longer dared to hope?"

"To this old man," replied the adjutant, pointing to Augustine; "and the general expressly commanded me to tell you so."

The count was stupefied. He thought he was dreaming, and, without uttering a word, he regarded alternately the beggar and the adjutant.

"I share your surprise," continued the orderly; "but such is the fact. It is to this man that you owe your life."

"Yes; it is the truth," added Augustine gently. "You see that a beggar may be sometimes useful, even to those who despise him."

"How!" cried the count, reddening. "Is it you, then, Old Augustine, that I must thank—you whom we treated so shamefully the evening when we met you going to the cemetery? Oh! you have been



avenged in a terrible manner! Your prophecy is accomplished. Charles is there laid in the earth, killed by the hand of a friend. Ah! forgive him, forgive both of us!"

"I have already forgotten all. May your brother have had time to implore pardon of the Lord before appearing at his tribunal! Humble yourself beneath his hand, and beseech him to banish from you that evil spirit which has already caused the loss of so many unfortunates. You see the terrible consequences of that fatal prejudice on a point of honor which urges a man to kill even his friend, often from a trifling motive, and thus to throw whole families into mourning and despair."

Alfred regarded him for some time in silence. The beggar's words seemed to have forcibly struck his mind. After a pause, he again addressed Augustine.

"Augustine," said he, "how can I show my gratitude to you? I know how great the benefit which I owe to your generous mediation, and I fear that I cannot reward you in a worthy manner."



“Rest easy,” replied the beggar; “I will myself ask the reward which I desire; but prepare for a demand which will probably appear to you extravagant. In the first place, I pray you to tell no one but your father that it was I who saved your life.”

Augustine then returned to the general, with whom he conversed for a long time. They separated with tears in their eyes, as though they had seen each other for the last time. Louis, after having conducted his friend as far as the door of the hotel, followed him for a long time with his eyes.

“What sorrow!” said he to himself, with a deep sigh. “What a severe penance! Ah! the crime of which he accuses himself without divulging it must be very great to make him resolve to expiate it in a manner so hard and so humiliating. The religious sentiments which animate him to-day must be very strong to have thus subdued a soul hitherto indomitable.”





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE.

**H**OWEVER, the appearance of affairs soon changed. The French were defeated in their turn, and the Germans retook the capital. The prince and the court returned there, and Edward, who had not ventured to rejoice at the victory of enemies whose presence subjected him to the pursuit of justice, began to fear them more deeply than ever. To escape the anger of the prince, and the vengeance with which he was threatened from the resentment of a father justly irritated, he wished to seek safety in flight. He knew well that he could not remain much longer in his retreat without being discovered.

He was already sufficiently recovered to hope that he might take service again, and he resolved to enlist in the



army of a neighboring state, where he might equally defend the cause of Germany. But Augustine, to whom he disclosed this design, shook his head, and answered :

“To you it seems easy to leave your country; but do you know how difficult it is to find another? Rather beg the God of mercy to undertake your defence. Be converted to him in the sincerity of your heart, and he will come to your assistance. Wait a few days; perhaps the prince may relent, and his minister’s anger become appeased.”

“Alas!” answered Edward, “I cannot give myself up to so sweet a hope. I have no reason to hope that my enemy will desist from all pursuit, and pardon me. I do not doubt that my friends have made the greatest efforts to obtain this pardon, of which I feel myself unworthy; but, since I am condemned to death, I do not wish to die a shameful death. I wish to fly, seek another country, and shed my blood on a field of battle rather than on the scaffold.”

“Well, I will not let you go,” replied Augustine. “You must promise me to post-



pone the execution of your projects for some days longer. If you have no motive to hope for your pardon, I have one, which you will know later. Trust me, you will thank me one day for not having despaired."

Edward could not understand the confidence which he saw in the beggar's words and looks ; but, as he had then become accustomed to consider him as a being enlightened by divine light, he submitted, and promised to wait for some time longer.

The next day, the beggar presented himself at the residence of the minister, and asked to speak with Count Alfred, who was still suffering from his wounds. The young count received him with a pleasure as lively as it was sincere, and made him sit beside him.

"I come," said Augustine, smiling, "to ask the reward of the service which I rendered you. You know that you are my debtor, and I am a somewhat exacting creditor, anxious to be satisfied."

"Ask, my dear Augustine—ask all that you wish," answered the count. "The life which you have restored me would be



hardly sufficient to testify all the gratitude which I owe you."

"You alone cannot pay your debt," continued Augustine, with a mysterious smile. "Your father must aid you by every means in his power. Conduct me to him; I will tell him what I desire, and, in case of need, you will support me with your influence, for I have a great deal to ask of him."

Alfred regarded the beggar with surprise, and could not guess what he desired. However, he did not wish to force Augustine, by his entreaties, to reveal his secret, and he conducted him to his father's apartment.

The minister was then surrounded by public officials, and by a great number of persons attached to his service. When the beggar appeared, all turned to look at him, and all conversation ceased immediately.

"Father," said Alfred, advancing towards the minister, and holding Augustine by the hand, "I here present to you my preserver—he to whom we owe—I, life; you, the preservation of your last son. You know him?"

The minister regarded for some time



with a scrutinizing glance, the beggar who was standing before him, his head humbly bowed.

“I know him, without doubt,” said he ; “I have passed him by thousands and thousands of times and never could I have imagined that he would one day become the preserver of my son, and have such a right to my gratitude.

“Approach, Augustine, and tell me how you were able to touch the heart of the French general, who was insensible to my prayers and tears. How did you obtain from his inflexible severity that which the most urgent entreaties and generous offers of our prince could not obtain?”

“Nothing is impossible to friendship and gratitude,” answered the beggar.

“What you now say,” said Alfred’s father, “is an enigma to me. I ask a clearer response, a more precise explanation.”

“Pardon, my lord, but I venture to pray you to leave me my secret. Let it suffice that you enjoy the happiness of having recovered your son.”

The minister would not insist ; but his gaze seemed as if seeking to penetrate the



depths of this extraordinary man's soul, who stood before him in the same posture in which he had so often remarked him under the linden-tree.

"When I learned," continued the minister, after a short pause, "that it was you to whom I owed the life of my son, the only one that Providence has left me, I caused the most minute enquiries to be made concerning you, and I could only learn that you were a stranger living on the alms of the passers-by, and that you were weak-minded and superstitious."

Augustine made no answer, but his look revealed the painful impression which the minister's last words had made upon him.

"A great number of persons," continued the minister, "regarded you as a spy in the enemy's service; I cannot believe it. What you have done for my son is a proof to the contrary. But there is one point on which every one agrees, and of which I am myself persuaded; that is, that you are not an ordinary beggar, and that you are something more than a beggar."

"Ah!" quickly answered Augustine, "they deceive themselves in judging me



thus. I am no more than a beggar, and less than a beggar, for—”

Augustine stopped short, and the minister, after waiting some time that he might finish his sentence, spoke again.

“Listen, my friend, I must not let the preserver of my son continue to beg his bread. I am rich ; ask what you will, I can refuse you nothing. I wish to provide for all your wants, and secure to you an honorable and independent existence. Believe me, this debt of gratitude it will be sweet for me to pay.”

“I would accept your offers with respectful eagerness,” replied Augustine, “if the goods of this world were more suitable for me than the poverty in which I am.”

“But you expect a reward,” said Count Alfred. “What do you wish, then? What do you ask? Speak frankly.”

“I am going to tell you,” answered Augustine, in a solemn tone. “I have just saved your life ; now I ask you to save that of an unhappy man whom the law has condemned, but whom it can pardon.”

“And who is the criminal?” said the minister, with a quick gesture of surprise.



“The murderer of your son.”

“Heaven! what do you ask? The murderer of Charles? Ah! no, never! his sentence is passed—the prince has confirmed it.”

“You will implore for him, my lord, the prince’s clemency. He cannot refuse a father who comes to ask pardon for the murderer of his son. Doubtless it must appear painful to you to pardon the criminal; but mercy becomes the great above all, and the only revenge worthy of a Christian is to pardon.”

The minister, stupefied, made no answer. He paced the room with rapid strides, and evinced the most lively agitation; at length his son stopped him, and conversed with him for a moment in a low voice.

“Tell me, Augustine,” then said the minister, “whence comes the interest which you manifest in Lieutenant Edward?”

“He is unhappy, and I am a Christian. How could I help interesting myself in him? Have you yourself, my lord, never felt pity for misfortune? Has your heart never been opened to those gentle feelings which the sight of a fellow-creature’s sufferings excites in us? Oh! no; I know it.



You, too, have been touched by the tears of misery and the murmurs of the unhappy. Ah ! be always compassionate, always generous ! Remember that he for whom I come to implore your pity has many times already shed his blood in defence of his country, and that all his ambition to-day is to shed what remains to him in so noble a cause. Pardon him ! Spare his life, I conjure you, by that son whom I have preserved to you."

The minister appeared moved ; a tear glistened in his eye, and, in a trembling voice, he asked the beggar if he knew Edward's retreat.

" Yes, I know it," answered Augustine, in a firm, calm tone.

" Where is he hidden ? "

" My lord ! I depend on your generosity. He is at my house. It was I that dressed his wound, who took care of him, and perhaps saved his life.

" What noble sentiments ! " cried Alfred, " Ah ! father, you cannot appreciate them as we can. You are not perhaps aware that this same Augustine had been, only a few months before, the object of our insulting



raillery ; that we wounded him in the most cruel manner. And yet he has solicited and obtained for me the life I was condemned to lose, and he comes to-day to ask that of my companion in an unworthy pastime."

The minister turned to the beggar.

"I thank you, Augustine," said he, in accents of deep emotion—"I thank you for what you have done for my son and myself. I acknowledge that beneath the rags which cover you beats a heart so noble and so generous that it would be hard to find its equal amongst the highest classes. I cannot help thinking that you do not belong to the ordinary class of beggars. Your life is a most mysterious one ; but I will respect your secret. Return to Edward, and tell him I have pardoned him. He shall know hereafter if my request has been granted by the prince, as I hope it will ; but be assured I shall leave nothing undone to obtain his pardon."

The minister could say no more ; overcome by the inward struggle which he had sustained, he made a sign to the beggar that he might retire. Augustine respect-



fully kissed his hand, and with his eyes still moist with tears, but sparkling with joy, he left the room.

The minister's intercession with the prince in favor of Edward had a result as prompt as it was satisfactory, and Augustine, whom the minister had caused to be summoned in order to communicate to him these happy tidings, hastened to convey them to Edward, but without telling him to whom he owed his pardon.

The young officer could not at first believe so much happiness was his, and it was not till he had learned the truth from some of his friends, to whom he had secretly made himself known, that he gave himself up to joy and hope.

After six weeks' arrest, which had been inflicted on him in punishment of his fault, he presented himself to the prince, in order to thank him. The prince profited by this opportunity to reprimand him severely for his thoughtlessness, and then sent him to the minister, adding that it was to his generous intercession that he owed his life.

The minister received him gravely, but without any appearance of resentment ; and



when Edward wished to thank him for his generosity: "It is not to me," said he, "that you owe thanks, but to a man whom, perhaps, you were far from supposing had so much influence with me. This man is Augustine the beggar, and it is to his entreaties that you owe your pardon."

"Can it be possible?" cried Edward, starting back in astonishment.

"It must be possible, since it is really so," laughingly said Alfred, who had himself presented Edward to his father. "But do you know to whom I also owe the pleasure of seeing you again?"

"No," answered Edward. "Augustine, indeed, told me that the French general had at length accepted the exchange of three officers whom the prince had offered to him to obtain your liberty, but until now I have always thought that, if our enemy relented, it was because of the advantage to be derived from the exchange."

"You are mistaken, my friend," said Alfred. "The general into whose hands I had fallen showed himself insensible to my father's tears and entreaties, and to the merit of the officers who were offered in ex-



change. It was reserved for another to obtain my liberty. This person, more powerful than my father or than any prince, is a mere beggar—it is Augustine.”

Edward was so amazed that he remained some time mute with surprise. When he had recovered his speech, he begged Alfred to relate how all this had come to pass.

Alfred hastened to gratify him. Afterwards they both repaired to Augustine's house to express to him their gratitude.

“I have only done my duty,” answered the beggar, with gentleness and humility. “I am but a poor sinner. For my reward, I only ask secrecy of you.”

The two friends offered him a pension ; but he refused it. They proposed to have him admitted to an asylum, so that he might there pass the rest of his days in prayer and meditation, but he again refused.

“Well!” continued Alfred, “if you will not accept anything for yourself, ask for others. We admit that it is impossible for us to show our gratitude in a manner worthy of the favors we have received from you ; but at least do not deny us the plea-



sure of acknowledging them as far as we are able."

Then Augustine relented, and asked some help for the orphan asylum and for the only Catholic church which there was in the city. They hastened to comply with his wishes, and the aid he obtained for these worthy objects even surpassed his hopes.







## CHAPTER VII.

### DEATH OF A MARTYR.

**A**UGUSTINE had returned to his place under the linden at the New-Gate, but he did not remain long there. The French army was again in the ascendant, and had regained entire possession of the city.

One day, Augustine had repaired to a neighboring village, of which the French had just taken possession. He was alone in the church praying, when he saw enter a troop of men, with hideous faces and ragged garments, whom he recognized as belonging to the lowest classes of the capital. Encouraged by the hope of impunity, they had come with the intention of pillaging the treasures which the enemy had respected; and they went up to the altar to force open the door of the tabernacle. A holy anger inflamed Augustine. He arose, and, follow-



ing the profaners, he cried out to them in a voice of thunder: "Stop, unhappy men! Fear the divine vengeance! It will not leave your crime unpunished."

The criminals were at first surprised; but, seeing the beggar feeble and deprived of one hand, they burst out laughing, and continued their efforts to obtain the treasures which they coveted. Augustine could no longer contain himself; he threw down to the foot of the altar the one who held the instrument for forcing the tabernacle, and with his own hand dragged him out of the church. All the others followed.

Reaching the square in front of the church, they surrounded Augustine, and attacked him fiercely. The beggar did not feel his wounds. Animated with a strength which his adversaries were far from suspecting in a white-haired man, he repulsed his assailants, and compelled them to beat a retreat.

But exhausted by the length of his unequal struggle, and by the loss of blood which was flowing from a large wound in his head, Augustine fell on the steps of the church. His eyes shone with a brighter



light, and in a loud voice he said : “ O my God ! how happy I am to have been able to shed some drops of blood in defence of thine august Sacrament ! I thank thee for it, O my Saviour ! and I beseech thee to unite this humble sacrifice to that which thou didst offer for me on Calvary.”

However, feeling his strength desert him, he wished to rise and call assistance. His voice failed him ; he fell back unconscious on the pavement. The church stood apart at the entrance of the village, surrounded by tall shrubs ; but an old woman who had come to pray for her son lately killed in battle, hearing Augustine’s last words, and being near him, tried to raise him. She had not strength to do so, and was obliged to call to her assistance several French horsemen who were passing at a little distance.

What was the surprise of the commander of the troop when he recognized the beggar as the person for whom he had a short time before obtained an audience of the general ! He immediately commanded two of his men to dismount and carry the wounded man to his dwelling, whilst he himself went



in all haste to seek one of the army surgeons.

The surgeon dressed the wound, and Augustine recovered consciousness.

“I feel,” said he, “that my wound is mortal, and that I have only a few hours more to live; do me the favor, gentlemen, to apprise the priest of this village, and beg him to bring me the last consolations of the dying; I would also like once again to see your general, to bid him farewell.”

The captain answered that his wishes should be complied with, and he immediately sent to find the priest, who hastened to come.

The headquarters were held in a town at some distance, and it would be two hours before Augustine could receive the visit of his old comrade in arms.

When the priest, before going to the beggar, went to take the chalice, he was terrified on seeing that an attempt had been made to force the tabernacle. His surprise was still more increased when, in going out by the door opposite, he saw the steps stained with blood. He immediately suspected what had occurred. On entering



the room where Augustine lay half-unconscious, he met the woman who had witnessed this tragic event, and she told him all that she had seen and heard.

Augustine awoke from his stupor, and, seeing the priest :

“God be praised !” said he ; “I shall not die alone and forsaken, as I feared a moment since, and I shall receive the Sacrament of my Saviour’s love before appearing at the tribunal of his justice.”

“Be consoled, my brother,” answered the priest ; “God has deigned to accept the sacrifice of the blood which you have shed in defence of his holy mystery. I have learned all. I know that those impious men struck you, after having attempted to place a sacrilegious hand on the Holy of Holies. Behold your God, who comes to offer himself to you in reward of your generous devotion to his holy cause.”

Although Augustine, since he had settled in the country, had always lived as a saint, he yet wished to profit by the little strength which was left him to make a general confession of his whole life, and the



minister of Jesus Christ thought that he should not oppose this pious desire, even whilst he had the conviction that this long review of the past was unnecessary.

Augustine had finished his confession, when the general entered the apartment. He could not restrain his tears on seeing the sufferings and resignation of his friend.

“My poor Felix,” said he, in an agitated tone, “in what a condition do I find you !”

“Do not pity me, my friend,” answered Augustine ; “rather thank with me the divine mercy for having given me the opportunity of expiating by the shedding of my blood the crime which I have so long endeavored to efface by my tears. I feel that I am dying, and I see approach with confidence the end of a life but a small part of which I have consecrated to him to whom it wholly belongs. I trust in his infinite mercy, and I await without fear the moment when I shall appear before him. But you, my friend—you who are every day exposed to perish on the battle-field, ah ! forget not that you will also appear before that severe Judge who is soon to call me before his dread tribunal. Have pity on



your soul, if you wish that the Lord may have pity on it. Return to your God in the sincerity of your heart, and tremble at the thought that the longer your life may be, more terrible also will be the account which you shall one day have to render. Pardon me, Louis, if I speak to you thus ; but I cannot help expressing to you my fears, and making you share my apprehensions. Ah ! I entreat you by the friendship whose sweet bonds once united us, and, still more, by the love which you owe to God, by the love of yourself, return to the path of truth ! You have been misled, as I was, by impious doctrines, and you are still guided by the unhappy opinions which have accumulated so many evils on our country. Ah ! that I might communicate to you the light with which the Lord has vouchsafed to favor me ! You could then understand my heart ; this state of misery and humiliation to which I have condemned myself would appear but a very feeble expiation of the evil I have done."

The general made no answer ; but his tears proved that the dying man had not spoken to an insensible heart. He took



the hand which his friend held out to him, and, making an effort to overcome his sorrow,

“Felix,” said he, “pray for me, so that God may have mercy on my soul. I feel now, more than ever, how unhappy I am to have left, like many others, the way of justice, and forgotten the lessons which I received in my childhood ; but, alas ! yielding to the general impulse, I have no longer strength to resist the torrent, and I expect my salvation only through the mercy of God.”

“I can imagine, Louis,” replied Augustine, “the difficulties you meet at every step ; but the same God who has been pleased to sustain me by his grace will give you also the strength to surmount them, if you address yourself to him with that confidence which justifies his mercy.”

These words were pronounced with so much warmth that they entirely exhausted the dying man’s last strength. Augustine asked to receive extreme unction. He received the two sacraments with a fervor which edified not only the general, but also the captain and the surgeon, who had just entered to assist at his last moments. Then were



these proud republicans, as if drawn by an invisible power, seen to kneel at the foot of the death-bed, to answer the prayers which the priest recited, and mingle their tears with those shed by their commander, as if they, too, were about to lose a friend.

When Augustine felt that he had but a moment more to live, with his failing hand he drew the general towards him, and said : “ Farewell, Louis, save your soul ! ”

“ My God ! ” said he, almost immediately after, “ into thy hands I commend my spirit. Ever adored and praised be the most holy Sacrament of the Altar ! ”

And he expired.







## CHAPTER VIII.

### RETROSPECTION.



THE campaign had just ended, when two officers were seen approaching the residence of the Catholic priest of the capital. They came to ask him to give them some information as to the antecedents of Augustine, that mysterious beggar whose tragical death had excited the attention of the whole city, and given rise to innumerable conjectures. In truth, since the striking proofs of interest and friendship which the French general had bestowed on him, it could no longer be doubted that this man had hidden under an assumed name one more distinguished. But amongst all the refugees whom the Revolution had cast on a foreign soil, no one could remember having seen any who, like Augustine, refused all the assistance which was offered them, and



condemned themselves, like him, to a poor and miserable life.

The priest, Augustine's only confidant, at first made some objection about revealing his secrets to the two officers ; but when he recognized in one Count Alfred, and in the other Lieutenant Edward, he thought he might break silence, and make them acquainted with the particulars of the past life of him who had saved the life of both. He gave them then a manuscript written in Augustine's own hand. This document was in French, and on many of its pages might still be seen traces of the tears which the penitent had shed in writing them. It is from these papers that we have extracted the following details. May they interest and, above all, edify our young readers.

Augustine, or rather Felix, since Felix is the real Christian name of this mysterious man, had sprung from one of the noblest families in France. He lost his parents at an early age, and was placed under the guardianship of one of his uncles, who neglected nothing to give him an education as solid as it was brilliant.

Felix responded to his tutor's care with



a zeal proportioned to the happy dispositions of his heart and the fine qualities of his mind.

He had scarcely attained his twenty-fourth year, when he was already versed in all the branches which compose the education of a young nobleman ; but, unhappily, he was ignorant of the science of sciences—that of religion. His uncle had entirely neglected this essential foundation of a good education, and the heart of the unfortunate young man was soon exposed to all the seductions of an impious and corrupt age. His manly beauty, his affable and elegant manners, his wealth and connections, attracted to him the attention of men the most influential in society, and it was thus that he connected himself with the chiefs of modern philosophy, the Voltaire, Diderots, and D'Alemberts, whose most zealous disciple he became.

He lived thus for several years like a fallen angel. But the natural rectitude of his mind made him soon discover all the immorality concealed beneath the pretended philosophy of the age, and he was soon obliged to confess to himself what a



dreary void these doctrines leave in the soul of him who endeavors to make them the rule of his conduct. He felt that they had taken all from him, and had given him nothing in exchange.

An inexpressible uneasiness took possession of his soul, and embittered the fairest days of his life. He cursed the perfidious friends who had led him into their paths, and he broke with them. Hoping to find some consolation in the study of natural sciences, he sought to apply himself to them with an ardor equal to that which he had just before shown for the fearful principles of the philosophic school; but he found there only weariness, because, studying only effects, he could not yet go back to the First Cause which had produced them.

Fatigued by his fruitless efforts to arrive at that interior peace of which he so deeply felt the want, he thought to lose in material enjoyments the weariness which preyed upon him, and he gave himself up to them with an impetuosity which partook of delirium. However, God did not abandon him; the noble sentiments with which his heart had ever been animated recovered the



ascendency ; he was ashamed of himself, and renounced those pleasures into which despair alone had hurried him.

Disgusted with the enjoyments of the flesh as well as those of the mind, without faith, without hope, Felix no longer felt any desire ; his moral faculties were exhausted ; his heart was dry, and incapable of undertaking anything.

He then resolved to divert himself by travelling, and he went over all those countries of Europe which presented the greatest attractions to his curiosity ; but weariness and disgust pursued him everywhere, beneath the beautiful sky of Italy, as in the mist that shrouds Great Britain ; in the midst of the gayest society of capitals, as in the depth of the most desert countries.

During one of his journeys, he met a friend of his childhood, who afterwards distinguished himself in the French Revolution, and, like so many others, expiated on the scaffold the infatuation with which he had embraced the Utopian follies of the new legislators. The manuscript only mentions him by the name of Louis.



Louis was a young man of a lively disposition; he loved gaiety and pleasure. Nevertheless, he had such an affection for Felix that the latter's gloomy and even fierce temper did not repel him. He followed him everywhere, and made every effort to divert him; and if he did not entirely succeed in dispelling his gloomy melancholy, he had at least the pleasure of seeing him sensible of the interest which he manifested in him.

Louis had received in his childhood an excellent education; but he had been unable to resist the pernicious example of the society in which he lived. He became an infidel and a libertine, and only discovered his delusion when he was condemned to death by those same men whom he had been pleased to extol as the founders of liberty, whilst they were in reality its destroyers. As he was about to mount the scaffold, he remembered the last words of Felix: "*Farewell, Louis! save your soul!*" And this last wish of a dying friend led, together with the recollections of his childhood, to his entire conversion.

But let us return to the period when our



two friends met when returning to France. They were both wearied : the one with having vainly sought after happiness ; the other with having too long abused it, if, however, a life passed in disorder and forgetfulness of God can be called happiness.

Louis proposed to Felix to take service. He maintained that that was the shortest and surest means to drive away weariness, and to recover his habitual gaiety ; and Felix consented.

The Anglo-Americans had proclaimed their independence ; but feeling that they could not long sustain it without the aid of an allied power, they applied to France. Louis XVI. hesitated to espouse their cause ; the eloquence of Franklin, and the voice of public opinion, prevailed over his reluctance. He recognized American Independence, and war was declared with England. Louis and Felix resolved to take part therein, and enlisted as simple volunteers in the troops which France was sending to the New World.

Felix remained there three years ; his courage often merited for him the most flattering eulogiums from his commanders, but



he congratulated himself much more at having found so powerful a means of distraction. Now sailing along the shores of a boundless ocean, again wandering through the virgin forests and immense plains of the new continent, he felt his faculties gradually returning and his heart expanding. The dangers to which he was every day exposed, and the numberless hardships which he had to undergo, offered ever-reviving attractions.

However, the new life which he enjoyed was but an artificial life, like that which galvanism communicates to a corpse. The action of the electric fluid ceasing, the corpse resumes its former inertness. It was thus that, as long as the bustle of camps, the clash of arms, occupied the young soldier's thoughts, he did not feel the void which reigned in his soul; but, finding himself alone and away from these powerful distractions, he heard an interior voice which said to him, as Saint John did to the Christians of Sardis: "You appear to be living, but you are dead." \*

\* "Nomen habes quod vivas, et mortuus es."  
(Apoc. iii.)



It was towards the end of the third year which he passed in America that an extraordinary event occurred which was to change the destiny of Felix, and condemn him for ever to tears and sorrow. Here is how he relates it himself in the manuscript, which we copy verbatim.








## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SACRILEGE

“NE day, our company was sent against the Indians, who had become the allies of the English, and occupied the shores of Lake Erie. This expedition presented more than ordinary dangers ; this was sufficient to make me pursue it with an ardor unfelt before.

“ Our courage could not save our small number from the havoc which the enemy made in our ranks. Of ninety men of whom our company was composed, there remained only twelve, and we were obliged to beat a hasty retreat to avoid falling into the hands of our adversaries, who would have spared our lives only to take it from us later in a more atrocious manner.

“ In our flight, we had to endure a great deal from cold and hunger. Forced to take



a very circuitous route to rejoin the army, we passed several days in the most cruel sufferings.

“ One morning, we entered a small Indian village which we were far from hoping to meet, and, impelled by a ravenous hunger, we determined to avenge ourselves for the losses we had undergone by pillage ; but all the inhabitants had fled at our approach, and when we had ransacked every nook and corner of their miserable huts, in the hope of finding therein some food, we found them as empty as though they had already been pillaged.

“ A cabin built partly of wood and partly of stone, situated at some distance from the village, attracted my attention. I immediately ran towards it, accompanied by a sergeant named Jacques, and I entered. A priest was saying Mass ; some Indians, kneeling around him, were praying with profound recollection ; but, when they perceived us, they arose, terrified, and took flight.

“ Dare I continue ? Shall I tell of the fearful sacrilege with which the devil inspired us ? Ah ! even yet my hair stands



on end at this horrible recollection, my hand trembles, and I hardly feel strength to hold the pen. God of justice ! how could I thus provoke thy vengeance ? God of goodness ! how could I thus outrage the sacrament of thy love ? Pardon, Lord, pardon a wretch who was then led astray by the spirit of evil, as formerly the Jewish deicides knew not what they did !

“ I had, indeed, rejected the fatal doctrines of those pretended philosophers who believed themselves sent to change the face of the world, and regenerate society. I had, indeed, returned from their blasphemies and their hatred of legitimate authority ; their odious egotism had been too revolting to me, and I had broken off all connection with them ; but, alas ! after having withdrawn from their path, I still refused to enter into that of truth, and attach myself to the church which alone could fix my belief. I was too proud to submit to the faith which she required of me ; and, unwilling to be an atheist, I had become a deist.\*

\* The atheist is he who denies the existence of God ;



“On setting my foot in the lonely temple of the Indians, I felt all my ungodly passions revive within me. Besides, the hunger which had so long tormented me, and the vexation at seeing our expedition end in so disastrous a manner, had excited my fury, and, urged by the devil, I resolved to vent my anger on the feeble victim whom chance had thrown into my hands.

“I approached the altar, and, my eyes sparkling with rage, I ordered the minister of the living God to furnish us immediately with the means of appeasing the hunger which consumed us.

“‘Let me finish,’ answered the priest mildly, with a look which would have softened a tiger; ‘then I may be able to satisfy you.’

“‘We will not wait; we must be served this very moment.’ Seizing him violently by the arm, I attempted to drag him away; but he was still holding the chalice, when it slipped from his hands, and the blood of the Saviour of the world was spilled on the altar and on the ground.

the deist, he who acknowledges it, but who, rejecting revelation, makes a God and religion of his own.



“ I stopped, seized with a secret terror ; and I saw the priest, after having taken the Sacred Host, cast himself on his knees to collect even the smallest drops of the blood of his divine Master. He said nothing, but his eyes expressed an unspeakable sorrow ; and if it could not make me acknowledge my crime, it at least excited my pity for the unhappy old man whom I had so sensibly outraged.

“ Jacques, whose impiety was not greater than mine, but whose disposition was harder and more savage, picked up the chalice.

“ ‘ If they refuse us bread,’ said he, ‘ here is what will procure it for us.’

“ The priest then turned towards him with tearful eyes, and would have implored him to renounce his sacrilegious design ; but his trembling lips could only articulate a few incoherent words, and, sinking under the excess of his affliction, he fell at my feet unconscious.

“ Frightened, I ran and took the water from the font, and bathed with it the temples of the old man, who soon came to himself. I then began to feel all the odiousness of my crime, and I could not endure



the looks of the priest when he again opened his eyes; they were so many daggers piercing my soul. I wished to wait until he was entirely recovered, but I had not courage; I took flight, as though the vengeance of Heaven already pursued me.

“Jacques followed me, carrying the chalice. ‘My friend,’ said I to him, ‘leave the chalice there; it will bring misfortune on us.’

“‘You tremble,’ answered he; ‘you are afraid, and of what? This vessel will be very useful to us, since it will procure us bread. We shall perhaps soon find another village whose inhabitants will be glad to give us something to eat in exchange for it.’

“I dared not reply. It seemed to me that all nature had conspired against us to punish my sacrilege, and I feared even my companion in misfortune. His voice had in it something so terrible that it was echoed in the very depth of my soul. I even feared to see him, crazed by hunger, throw himself upon me, and devour me.

“Our companions were gone, and we wandered at random through large clearings,



occupied more in seeking some food than in finding our way. No game crossed our path, and we saw ourselves already doomed to die in the midst of this vast wilderness, when we came upon a half-extinguished fire and some fragments of roasted meat which the Indians had doubtless left after a halt in this place. We could then satisfy the hunger which tormented us, and, throwing some dried branches on the yet burning ashes, we warmed our benumbed limbs.

“ Jacques gradually recovered his gaiety. Forgetting all the dangers which we had escaped, and careless of those which might yet await us, he thought only of the present moment, and ate with as much appetite as though he was in the midst of his comrades.

“ As for me, I remained silent. The scene of the morning pursued me like a hideous spectre ; I still seemed to see stretched at my feet the unhappy old man whom I had outraged in so odious a manner.

“ However, we could not always remain in the same place, and, as we had yet a long way to go before rejoining our companions, it was necessary for us to provide food for



the following days. We agreed to go each in a different direction, to seek some path, or try to kill some game, and afterwards to return to the same place, and communicate to each other the result of our attempts.







## CHAPTER X.

### THE ANGUISH OF DEATH.

“**H**AVING no other arms than my musket, I directed my course towards the west, and arrived on the banks of a small lake a few miles in circumference, which flows into Lake Erie by a stream of water resembling a river. A gloomy forest stretched all around.

“As the winter had been extremely severe, the whole lake was covered with a thick coat of ice, which appeared likely to long resist the first heat of the March sun, which already began to be felt.

“A flock of wild ducks attracted my attention, but, before I could load my gun, they flew away, directing their flight over the lake. Hoping that they would not delay in coming down, I followed them, and ventured fearlessly on the ice. The wea-



ther had become milder, although it was blowing a little. Dark masses of clouds floated in the air, and hid from time to time the sun's disc, which soon shone out again with renewed splendor.

“As the ice was covered with soft and not very deep snow, I could, without running any great risk, follow the ducks with a speed almost equalling their flight; and, when they were within reach, I discharged my gun. I struck one, which, however, being wounded only in one wing, flew away. I pursued him. After going a few steps, I stopped, terrified at seeing the ice already covered with several inches of water.

“Undecided as to what course I had better take, I remained a long time motionless. It was evidently thawing, and as I had already had occasion to observe how rapid it is when the first breath of spring has succeeded in melting the ice, I saw all the horrors of my position. Not daring either to advance or recede, I remained as if nailed to the spot.

“The weather was calm; a thick fog began to cover the lake, and the heavens



presented but a vast network of dark clouds which seemed about to precipitate themselves upon the earth. Soon large flakes of snow began to fall almost perpendicularly, and, mingled with fine rain, entirely hid my face. My gaze, turned towards the bank, sought to pierce this thick and gloomy veil; I discovered nothing, or rather, I saw around me only a wild and deserted plain where nothing gave signs of life or motion. A deathly silence had succeeded to the noise of the wind, and this silence was broken only by the plaintive cries of the bird whom I had wounded, and who was still seeking to avoid me. All nature seemed on the point of some great event.

“I listened, without very well knowing what I could hope to hear. Soon terrible and prolonged sounds reached me, and, becoming louder and louder, announced to me the approach of the danger which I dreaded. To faint but repeated crashes succeeded from time to time dull, heavy sounds like explosions of powder, or of rock torn by a mine from the side of a mountain.

“The ice commenced to tremble beneath



my feet like the soil of a volcano. A large fissure opened some paces in front of me, and the water came up with a terrible noise. In a moment the foaming waves were flowing around me. Terrified, I started back, and took to flight, thinking that I was approaching the bank, but I was stopped by another fissure.

“Seeking a circuit by which to escape this new danger, I redoubled my efforts to discover my situation; but I could distinguish nothing through the snow, which continued to fall with ever-increasing force. The wind, which had again risen, rustling in the trees on the bank, was the only thing which announced that I was not far from shore.

“Blinded by the snow which the wind drove in my face, and dizzy with the noise of the hurricane, I almost lost the use of my senses. I thought I saw my comrades making signs to me from the bank above; I even thought I distinguished their costumes, their arms, and heard their voices; but a gust of wind dispelled these fantastic cloud-pictures, and I became again aware of the terrible reality.



“ I fired several shots from my musket, as a signal of distress, hoping that they might be heard by a friend, or even by an enemy ; but the echoes of the shore alone fully repeated the noise of the discharge. No human voice answered me.

“ Meanwhile, my sufferings became more and more terrible, and the ice, which was splitting with a horrible noise, threatened me with certain death. I recalled then the crime which I had committed the morning of that same day, and I thought that punishment was following close upon it. Strange thing ! even at this moment, I had no faith in the mysteries of religion, and yet I trembled at the recollection of what I had done. I wished to pray, but my heart was dried up. I wished to invoke the God of the Christians whom I had so often blasphemed. Alas ! unhappily consistent with my principles, I was ashamed of this pretended weakness ; I feared to resemble those libertine sailors who think of God only when in danger, and I persisted in trusting to no other assistance than my courage and prudence.

“ Exhausted by my long journey, I threw



away my gun, and rushed with a sort of fury through the whirlwinds of snow which surrounded me on every side. It had become so thick that I could scarcely breathe. I lost all feeling of fear, and felt within me a sort of delirious pleasure in struggling against the storm.

“I continued to run, leaping over all the openings which met me at every step, but yet without knowing in what direction I was advancing. Everywhere the ice was giving away beneath my feet; everywhere I saw death impending; but I knew there was as much danger for me in remaining still as in running; and by running I might yet hope to gain the shore.

“Night came on; the darkness soon became so dense that I could no longer take a step without being exposed to fall into some abyss. I wrapped myself in my cloak, and lay down on the ice, in the hope that the cold would benumb my limbs, and take away from me all sense of my condition. But the temperature was above zero, and I saw myself condemned to suffer from one moment to another all the anguish of a fearful death.



“Hardly had I lain down, when I heard the howling of a wolf. This terrible noise resounded in my ears like the chords of a harmonious melody, and, rising immediately, I was about to run in the direction whence it came. But reflecting on the innumerable dangers of such an undertaking, I entirely lost courage, and resumed my former position. Then I listened only to the noise of the floating ice which was knocking against the yet unmoved piece on which I was.

“New terrors took possession of my soul ; they were warnings which God sent to recall me to himself. Instead of listening to this interior voice which would not let me sleep, I forced myself, on the contrary, to stifle it by diverting my thoughts from the fearful future which awaited me.

“I closed my eyes, as if, in spite of the principles of that stoical philosophy which I had embraced, I did not feel courage to look death in the face. It was that, without daring to confess it to myself, I already felt a sort of indefinable apprehension of the fate which was reserved for my soul on its departure from this world. Until



now, the tumult of pleasure had prevented me from reflecting seriously upon it; and in the thickest of battles, stunned by the cries of the victors and the moans of the vanquished, it had been impossible for me to dwell on this salutary thought. But then, when there was nothing to distract me, I could remember all that I had heard said on the judgment which follows death, and I felt a cold sweat overspreading all my limbs.

“All at once I felt the ice move under me. I arose, full of terror, and I saw the whole surface of the lake in motion. My sight grew dim, and, like a man who is falling into an abyss, I extended my arms in every direction to catch at the first object which might come to my hand.

“In that terrible moment, I thought all nature was overturned. The noise made by the ice in breaking, and the knocking of one piece against the other, was terrific, and my ears were deafened by it.

“Sometimes I saw enormous masses arrest the progress of smaller ones which the torrent pushed against them, and which, being piled upon the others, formed fantastic



pyramids and towers of a thousand different shapes. The pale light of the moon made them appear like spectres covered with white shrouds, and their aspect, continually changing, increased my fright more and more.

“By a singular chance, or rather by a special intervention of Providence, who wished to give me time for repentance, the piece of ice on which I stood was so large and thick that it resisted the repeated shocks which it had to sustain. Other pieces of ice were soon heaped upon it, and formed a species of hillock six or seven feet high, to which I clung, and whence I could contemplate this scene of horror.

“The wind, which had become stronger, drove my iceberg across the lake with an extreme velocity, and the continual turning round of this floating island caused such a dizziness that my imagination was affected by it.

“I thought I saw the snow falling, and all at once a troop of armed Indians pass before me, who, deaf to my cries, continued their way, with heads bent and eyes cast down. Then I thought I was sailing on a



vast sea, and felt the burning rays of a summer sun, which caused my last support to sink beneath my feet.

“I was usually only drawn from these gloomy reveries, or, more correctly speaking, from this profound delirium, by some violent shock, and I fell back almost immediately into the same delusions.

“At last a shock greater than any which had preceded it, and which was near throwing me into the lake, put an end to the wanderings of my senses, and, as the iceberg which bore me had ceased to turn round, I perceived that I was descending the current of a river. This sight revived my hopes. I again thought seriously of the means of saving myself. I remarked, with an inexpressible joy, that the water of the river was still frozen along the banks, and that I was approaching nearer and nearer to it.

“When the iceberg struck the still solid ice which separated me from the shore, I jumped on to this plank of safety, and commenced to run towards land. Hardly did I allow my feet to rest on the ice, so fearful was I of seeing it break under my feet ;



but I happily reached the land, and I fell powerless in the moss which covered the banks.

“Then, O my God ! I should have thanked thee for the infinite goodness with which thou hadst snatched me from the arms of death ; but, like those mariners of whom I have spoken before, and despised as being inconsistent, I also forgot, as soon as the danger was passed, all the reflections to which it had given rise in my mind.

“Day had dawned ; I discovered neither men nor animals, nor even any trace of a living being. One of those vast forests which are met with only in the New World covered all the surrounding country to the furthest limits of the horizon. I did not dare to trust myself in this labyrinth, where I might be lost at any moment, and I resolved to follow the river-bank.

“Soon I perceived a column of smoke which arose through the trees, and I advanced in that direction. I found a troop of Indians squatted around a large fire. There were two men, three women, and some children, who all kept their eyes fixed



on the fire in the most profound silence and complete inaction.

“I was received with an indifference which, in my condition, left me little hope. However, sitting amongst them, I had the good-fortune to make myself understood ; for, since my arrival in America, I had learned a little of the language of these savages. It would have been useless and even imprudent to declare my distress ; and I contented myself with asking something to eat. After some words, unintelligible to me, which they addressed to each other, they at last consented to give me a portion of the roast meat which they had just taken from off the fire ; but they did it with such a bad grace that I easily saw that they were animated by hostile feelings.

“The weather was gloomy and melancholy. A fine, drizzling rain, such as the thaw produces in North America, filled the air, and the shelter under which we were could hardly defend us from it.

“The Indians had resumed their first impassibility, and I could give myself up uninterruptedly to all the gloomy reflections suggested by the strange company in which



I was. I did not see how I could rejoin my friends, and I doubted, with reason, whether the Indians would show me the way. One of them especially regarded me with a glance so piercing that I felt as if crushed. He seemed to be still young ; his face was repulsively ugly, and his eyes shone with a light which made me shudder.

“ Towards the middle of the day, the rain ceased falling, and my companions prepared to depart. When all was ready, they arose without saying a word, and started. I remarked that they were not pleased to have me with them ; nevertheless, I took courage, and followed them, preferring to expose myself to become their victim rather than wander in the woods, and there die of hunger. Suddenly the chief of the troop, the same who had regarded me so fixedly, stopped, and demanded where I had put my gun. I answered that I had left it on the ice.

“ ‘ Take care,’ said he, ‘ do not offend the Great Spirit by saying that which is not so. We know you came to make war on us ; but we have given you hospitality ; you have eaten of our meat, we do not wish to harm you. Depart, if your life is dear to



you ; return to your own people. I have told you the truth, for my tongue is not forked. Go, and return no more.'

" I knew not how to answer these words, for their very tone had chilled me. At length I related the danger which I had run on the ice, and I thought I perceived that this recital made a favorable impression on the second of my companions. He spoke for some time with the chief in a low voice, and the chief made a sign that I might follow them.

" We pursued our march with a speed which astonished me all the more that I could distinguish no trace of a path. Only our guide stopped from time to time, for a moment attentively regarded the trees, then continued his way with the same rapidity as before. No one spoke, and the silence of the forest was broken only by the rustling of the dry leaves on which we trod.

" Although I no longer feared to die of hunger, yet I could not dwell without a shudder on the thought that I was in the midst of enemies who would perhaps profit by the first opportunity to sacrifice me to



their cruelty. I had not slept the night before; besides, I was so much exhausted by fatigue that I had scarcely strength to follow my companions.








## CHAPTER XI.

### PUNISHMENT OF CRIME.

“HORTLY after sunset, we halted to pass the night. The men prepared a kind of tent, and the women lit the fire. A young buffalo which our guide had killed on the way was soon cut up and put to roast.

“When the meat was ready, the Indians seated themselves around, and I obtained for my share a large enough piece, which I devoured rather than ate. But the same silence which had reigned during our journey reigned also during our repast. My companions seemed to feel the influence of the season, and to partake of the gloom of nature.

“After the meal, the Indians stretched themselves around the fire, as motionless as mute as though they were beings depriv-



ed of reason ; I lay down myself under the foot of a tree at some distance, and I soon fell into a profound sleep.

“ It was hardly midnight when I was awakened by a man who caught me by the hand, and, when I opened my eyes, I recognized by the pale light of the moon the Indian who had obtained the chief’s permission for me to follow them. He placed his finger on his lips to enforce silence, and made me a sign to depart with him. I obeyed, and he conducted me to a sufficient distance that he might not fear to awaken the others.

“ ‘ Hear my words,’ said he to me. ‘ Snake Eye has spared you because, appearing before him unarmed, you obtained hospitality from him ; but do not trust him in future. His hatred for the whites will recover the ascendancy, and then woe to you.’

“ ‘ What can I do?’ answered I, terror-stricken. ‘ Death threatens me from all sides. I wish to rejoin my friends, and I do not know in what direction to advance.’

“ Have patience ; I will guide you myself. But as we must not awaken the chief’s suspicions, you will gain that tree which you



see thrown down by the wind; you will hide in the neighborhood, and await my return. To-morrow evening I will come to take you.'

"Before I could reply, the Indian had already left me to rejoin his companions; and, my heart full of unutterable anguish, I directed myself hastily towards the place which had been pointed out to me.

"The tree had been pulled up by the roots, and its roots, still full of earth, rose to a height of twelve or fourteen feet. I sat down behind this shelter, and, confiding in my preserver's promise, I gradually regained my courage, and, falling asleep again, I did not awake till late the next day.

"On awakening, I thought I saw through the fog something approaching me; I could not yet distinguish whether it was a man or an animal. I feared that it was a wild beast, and, taking counsel only of my fear, I plunged deeper into the woods.

"After having remained some time hidden, neither seeing nor hearing anything, I thought that my frightened imagination had deceived me, and I wished to return to the tree; unhappily, I had forgotten to ob-



serve the way which I had taken, and, thinking to regain my first position, I went further and further away from it.

“ When I felt the sad certainty that I had lost my way, I still wished to try and take another direction to get out of this terrible labyrinth, but all my efforts ended in going further and further astray.

“ I ran from one place to another, calling with loud cries on him who was to save me from this fearful wilderness; but I was answered by the echo which repeated my words, as if in mockery of my grief. The same terrors which I had felt when descending the river on the floating ice now assailed me, and I thought that the day of divine vengeance had arrived.

“ I was seized with a violent vertigo, which changed the shape of all the surrounding objects. I seemed to see the trees, torn from the earth, knock against each other, and dance in an infernal ring about me, whilst the sun's disc, darkened, swung in the whitened vault of heaven.

“ For a long time I forced myself to combat these phantoms created by my delirious imagination; I could not succeed. At



length, tired out, I fell on the damp ground, hiding my face in my hands, like a child in the dark who thinks he sees a ghost. However, I gradually recovered the use of my reason, and, thinking that I must not be very far from the tree beside which my preserver had told me to wait, I gave myself up anew to the hope that he would know where to find me. I called him again with loud shouts; and, without going far from the spot which I had occupied, I looked in all directions to try and discover the one which I had so unfortunately forgotten. But a strong and continuous wind had risen, driving before it a dense fog, which prevented me from seeing anything, and the roaring of the wind in the branches of the trees was so great that I could no longer hear my own voice.

“Rumblings as fearful as those which had announced the breaking of the ice; dull and confused murmurs, coming from the depth of the wood, struck upon my ear. It was one of those fearful hurricanes, so frequent and so terrible in the New World, and of which the Old Continent offers but feeble images. The strongest trees were bent by



the force of the wind ; the severed branches flew in splinters through the air. All nature appeared threatened with destruction.

“Frozen with terror, I was crouched behind a tree, and I feared at every instant to see it fall and crush me. I thought I saw all the others thrown down, though they were only shaken. At length, yielding to fear, I crept to the trunk of another tree long since stretched on the ground, and resolved to wait there till the hurricane was over.

“Towards evening, the wind abated, the fog disappeared, and I perceived above my head the azure of the firmament. Encouraged by this pleasing sight, I came out from my hiding-place, and determined to make new efforts to find the tree at which the Indian had promised to meet me. I was going, when all at once the report of fire-arms arrested my attention. I remained where I was, struck with astonishment ; but I soon recovered myself, and, running in the direction whence I expected safety, I found the Indian trying to find me.

“ ‘ Why did you go away from me ? ’ said



he. 'Not meeting you here, I thought you had gone astray, and I fired a musket-shot to recall you. Rest easy. Snake Eye has ceased to live. When I returned to where he was, he was still sleeping soundly. This morning, as he no longer saw you, he asked me what had become of you. I answered that I knew nothing about you. But his piercing glance guessed my thoughts, and, without saying a single word, he turned in the direction opposite to this, in the hope of meeting you. He, in fact, supposed that you had followed the road which leads to the dwellings of the whites. After a long march, we saw far before us a man who looked like you, and, quitting the rest of the troop, Snake Eye rushed upon him. But I had promised to save you, and, following the chief closely, I struck him from behind with my tomahawk, and stretched him dead at my feet. He whom I took for you fled. I soon overtook him; he had fallen, exhausted with fatigue and hunger. I gave him something to eat, and, when he was satisfied, I spoke to him. He could not answer me. He is now fast asleep; and I came to find and conduct you to him,



for I think that he is one of your friends. He is white like you, and wears the same dress.'

"From the Indian's account, I could no longer doubt that the white man of whom he spoke was Jacques, my companion in misfortune. I followed my guide, and after a pretty long walk, when the sun had already sunk beneath the horizon, I found Jacques fast asleep. The Indian showed me at a little distance the body of Snake Eye, which he had hidden amongst the bushes. I helped to bury the body, and we returned to Jacques, who had at last awoke.

"He uttered a cry of joy on recognizing me; and I learned from him that, after having wandered for a long time in the wood, where, to avoid dying of hunger, he had been obliged to eat reptiles, he had been surprised by the last hurricane, and had suffered a great deal. I related to him, in turn, the singular adventures which had happened to me since our separation; and we thanked the Indian who had brought us together. Alas! in our blindness we would not acknowledge the hand of Providence, which had been extended over us to protect



us, and which had permitted the dangers we had run to call us to repentance.

“ Jacques still had the chalice. On showing it to me, he made use of some impious language which disgusted me. I dared not say anything to him ; but I deeply felt how misplaced were such words in the mouth of a man who still had so much need of the assistance of that same Providence to which he already owed his preservation. Ah ! if he had had to suffer the same agonies that I had, he would not, perhaps, have added new blasphemies to the sacrilege which we had committed.

“ After having passed the night on the spot where we met, the Indian showed us the route we must follow to reach the camp. Jacques gave him his gun as a token of gratitude ; I gave him my cloak, and we parted.

“ The sun had not yet attained the meridian of its course, when we were suddenly surrounded by a numerous troop of Indians, who, hidden behind some bushes, appeared awaiting our approach. Jacques then repented of having deprived himself of his musket ; but he still had his sword, and he drew it.



“Too certain that we could not defend ourselves, I snatched the sword from his hands; and, addressing myself to the Indians, I made them understand that we wished to do them no harm; and that we only asked to pass quietly through the country to rejoin our friends.

“‘You are our enemies,’ said the chief of the troop, ‘and, therefore, our prisoners.’

“They immediately stripped us of our clothes. When the Indians discovered the chalice, which Jacques had wrapped carefully in his cloak, they uttered cries of rage, and every arm was raised against us.

“‘It is the chalice which our father used,’ said the chief, his eyes sparkling with anger. ‘We must avenge him!’

“We learned from these words that our enemies belonged to the same village which we had attempted to pillage some days before, and where Jacques and I had polluted ourselves with a horrible crime. I would have persuaded them to suspend the effects of their too just wrath, and conduct us to the missionary who attended their little parish. They refused to listen to me, and immediately set to work to execute the



sentence of condemnation which the chief had pronounced upon us.

“After having bound us both to trees, they began with Jacques, whom they had found in possession of the chalice. They lit a large fire at his feet, and, after cutting off his hands, they tore open his bowels.

“The miserable man uttered fearful cries which pierced my soul ; but, although I had the conviction that the same fate was reserved for me, I had still sufficient courage to cry out to him :

“‘ Jacques, do not blaspheme, you have done enough of evil ; an avenging God pursues us. Pray and repent.’

“This warning, far from turning him back, seemed to irritate him more. Frightful oaths, horrible blasphemies, were his only reply, and I saw him die without repentance, without hope, without consolation !

“When he had ceased to live, the Indians turned to me. An icy shivering seized me. I tried to pray, but, in spite of the want which I felt of it, I could not. It seemed that there was no more mercy for me, that God was wearied of my impiety, and that



I had only to expect to feel the effects of his justice. Ah! how sharp was the remorse which tortured my soul! How terrible the thought that I was about to fall into the hands of an inexorable Judge!

“I had closed my eyes that I might not see the preparations for my torture, and, plunged in my gloomy thoughts, I no longer heard my murderers’ cries of rage, when suddenly a louder voice sounded in my ears.

“I raised my head, and saw before me that same old man whom I had dragged from the altar.

“The Indians surrounded him, and showed him the chalice. But before answering them, he approached and unbound me. I fell powerless at his feet. He raised me gently, and ordered the Indians to bring water, with which he bathed my temples.

“When he had revived me, he blamed the cruelty of the Indians with a severity which astonished me, and I remarked that his words made a deep impression on them. They afterwards buried the body of the unfortunate Jacques, and, the priest having made me a sign to follow him, we departed together.



“ In approaching the village, we saw women and children running to meet us, who received us with the greatest demonstrations of joy. They all gathered around the missionary, and respectfully kissed his hand. They afterwards accompanied him to his dwelling, which was not much better than the huts of the other inhabitants.

“ The old man made a sign for me to enter, and served me with bread, fruits, and game. I had had for several days only miserable food, and yet I did not venture to touch what he offered me. I was confused at owing my life to a man whom I had treated so shamefully, and I was at the same time surprised at the silence he observed in my regard ; for, since the moment when he had restored me to liberty, he had not addressed to me the slightest word.

“ Leaving me entirely given up to my reflections, he knelt before the image of Christ, the sole ornament of his wretched dwelling ; and, when the sun was near setting, he showed me a bed of leaves placed in a sort of closet adjoining the principal room, and, after having bid me good-night, he retired.



“Although the fatigue of the march, and the emotions of the day, had entirely exhausted my strength, I could not close an eye all night. Shame and remorse for my crime drove far from me the sleep which I needed so much ; and, besides, I was again seized with new terrors.

“‘God!’ cried I, in the anguish of my heart, ‘have I been spared but to suffer later a still more cruel death?’

“I wished to fly, but I fell back on my bed, a prey to the most violent despair. Next day the priest came to see me ; I was no longer conscious of my existence ; I was in the delirium of fever.”







## CHAPTER XII.

### BENEFITS OF RELIGION.

“ **A**FTER two days of mortal sufferings, I at length came to myself. The good old man to whom I owed my life was beside me. His eyes shone with love and pity; a tear glistened in them, and I felt his hand tremble as it held mine.

“ ‘God be praised!’ said he, ‘you are now saved. I feared much for you; but I was still more uneasy for the salvation of your soul than for the life of your body. You were surprised, doubtless, at the silence with which I received you; you were then too much agitated to understand what I would have said to you, and I put off to a more favorable moment the care of speaking to you of God and of your soul. The delirium into which you have fallen since prevented me, and I was compelled to wait



until to-day to speak to you of the important affair of your salvation. I will not reproach you with the sin you committed in attacking God ; but you have experienced, and your unfortunate friend, whom I would willingly have saved, has experienced in a still more cruel manner, how terrible is God in his punishments towards those who dare to place a sacrilegious hand on the body of his Son. You have been spared because the Lord wished not the death, but the life, of your soul. Thank him for his infinite goodness, and beseech him to enlighten you with his light, that you may acknowledge your fault, and, by your repentance, may also deserve your pardon.'

" Encouraged by words so gentle and benevolent, I thanked the priest, and tears of gratitude and repentance gushed from my eyes.

" ' I forgive you,' continued he, those unjust prejudices which modern infidelity has inspired in you against us ; but I hope in the end you will judge us more favorably. Perhaps you still fear my vengeance, as if the torments which your friend underwent, the torture which was reserved for yourself,



were not sufficiently cruel. Ah! rather give thanks to religion, which has restrained the arm and the wrath of these savage children of nature, who only yesterday became children of God, and who, to avenge their faith, knew not how to punish in a milder manner the profanation of which you had been guilty. Nevertheless, their anger gave way before the representative of their God, and it is not the first time that I have recalled them to humanity by the voice of religion. These people are yet children in the spiritual life which they have but recently received, and they require to be often warned, and even sometimes punished, when they forget that a Christian must pardon his enemies.'

"I afterwards related to the missionary my adventures on the lake and in the woods; he again took occasion from that to represent the deplorable state in which my soul was, and to make me understand how grateful I should be towards Providence, which had so constantly watched over me.

" 'You confess,' said he, 'that you could not pray, even when you felt its imperative necessity; and that astonishes you. Ah! my friend, when we have been so long away



from our God, when we have taken pleasure in hollowing out an abyss between his mercy and our unworthiness, it is very difficult to return to better sentiments, although danger often seems to make this return to prayer easy for us. How many unfortunates have been thus taken unprovided ! How many have waited till the last moment to return to God, and had not then the time or the strength ! Your mind was weakened by the struggle which you had to sustain against fear, and your body was worn out by fatigue and want of nourishment. You saw your cruel condition in all its horrors, the death and judgment which awaited you, and yet you could not address a single sigh to heaven ; your heart was dry, and your lips mute. Ah ! would to God that all sinners might feel such tortures ! they would learn not to put off their conversion till their last hour.

“ ‘ I speak to you as to a Christian, although the crime which you have committed denotes a man who does not believe in God ; but you have still some recollections of your early childhood, and your heart cannot be entirely hardened. Whatever be the dispo-



sitions of your soul, you can always pray. I understand how difficult this must appear to you ; but think of your soul ; consider that, if you have been saved from death this time, you will not always escape, and that the moment will come when you shall appear before the dread tribunal of a just and severe God. Ah ! I beseech you, make an effort, and, if you cannot yet pray from the abundance of the heart, pray at least with your lips. The Lord, touched by these efforts, will enlighten you with his light, and strengthen you with his grace.'

"According as the old man spoke, I felt the veil torn aside which until then had blinded me, and hope sprang up in my soul, so long a prey to discouragement and distrust.

"Meanwhile, the worthy minister of Jesus Christ lavished on me cares such as a mother would upon her child, and I soon recovered my health and strength.

"One day, I asked him how he had come to that country. He told me that he was of Flemish origin ; that, after the suppression of the Jesuits, the Order to which he belonged, he had remained in America, and had continued to preach the



Gospel to the savage tribes, going from one village to another, and reaping everywhere the most beautiful fruits of the divine Word.

“ ‘I had much to suffer,’ said he, ‘especially in the beginning; but God sustained me with his grace and consolation. Ah! if the worldlings who pity us knew how sweet it is to suffer for the glory of the Lord and the salvation of souls; if they knew how much happiness there is in the privations to which we condemn ourselves, in the dangers which assail us every day, they would lay aside their frivolous pleasures, and come to share our labor and our fatigue. They despise us as weak enthusiasts, who prefer the pains of a hard and adventurous life to the enjoyments of society, the consolations of a family and of devoted friends. But do they enjoy these pleasures, these consolations? Ah! their life is crossed by sufferings no less cruel than yours; and, in the weariness which consumes them in the midst of pleasures even the noisiest, have they a friend who consoles them as the Lord deigns to console us? I am, for many years, deprived



of the society of civilized men ; but I do not regret it, for I am here in the midst of my savages like a father among his children ; and what enjoyment more sweet than that which he finds in the bosom of his family ?’

“ These words were pronounced with a warmth which attested the most sincere conviction. The holy joy which I saw beaming in the old man’s features recalled my disgust of life and the indefinable inquietude which I had felt since I lent an ear to the sophistry of error, and abandoned my heart to the seductions of vice.

“ Every day I saw the Indians come and offer to the worthy priest the products of the chase, and the women brought him fruits. He took only what was absolutely necessary for him, and never dismissed the savages without addressing to them some pious words and giving them his blessing. They always received it kneeling, with their hands joined ; and, before rising, they kissed respectfully the skirt of his soutane.

“ ‘ You see,’ said he to me, ‘ how God takes care of me. He gives me all that is



necessary to the preservation of my life; and, if I have not the luxuries which people of the world enjoy at their splendid tables, I have not either the cares which often beset them when they are obliged to defray the expenses which their sensuality imposes upon them. I need not be anxious about what I shall eat to-morrow, for I trust that God will provide it; and this confidence has never yet been betrayed.'








## CHAPTER XIII.

### RETURN TO THE FAITH.

“HEN I was strong enough to go out, Father Bernard—so the missionary was called—or, to use the language of the Indians, *the Father*, invited me to accompany him to the church.

“I trembled on entering that place which I had so odiously profaned. The Indians and their wives and children were kneeling on the damp ground, and praying with a recollection which I could not remember to have seen in our splendid basilicas in Europe. And I, brought up amongst Christians; I, received, at my birth, into the society of the children of God; I—O my Saviour! pardon! pardon for an ingrate a thousand times more guilty than the Jews who crucified thee!

“I wished to pray, but my heart still



refused ; it seemed that an abyss separated me from that God whom I had so long disowned. I was like a man bound, stretched on the ground, without power to rise, and soliciting in vain the aid of a charitable hand. I felt, however, all the extent of my misery, and my eyes began to be opened to the light of truth.

“ I envied the happy fate of the Indians, whom I heard reciting with such lively faith the Lord’s Prayer, of which I had retained only a faint remembrance ; and, with tears in my eyes, I could at last pray the God of mercy to give me a faith equal to that which the youngest child among these savages possessed.

“ On my return to the cabin of my preserver, I informed him of all that had passed within me during the holy sacrifice.

“ ‘ What you tell me is consoling,’ answered he, ‘ for you are in the way of salvation. Faith is only a gift from heaven ; in asking for it, you show that you already have it. Courage, then, my friend, hope in the power of him who has preserved you till this day, that he may make manifest in you his infinite goodness. Continue to pray,



and you will see the darkness of your mind disappear, like the shades of night at the approach of the sun. If you are not tired of me, I will try to dispel your doubts, and you will one day acknowledge how good God is towards those who invoke him and hope in him.'

"I accepted this proposal with a joy as lively as it was sincere, and I resolved to profit by this occasion to become thoroughly instructed in the truths of a religion which I had learned to love in the person of the holy priest to whom I owed so much gratitude.

"I remained with him for nearly three months, and all this time was employed in my instruction. I will ever recall the happy moments when that worthy successor of the Apostles taught me the first principles of faith, and sought to enkindle in my heart the divine fire with which his own was inflamed. Often I saw tears flowing from his eyes, and his chest heaving with the emotion with which he spoke to me. He not only proposed to enlighten me, but he also wished to touch me, and, thanks be to the Author of all good, my heart did not remain insensible.



“ When I had got over my absurd errors, when all the prejudices against religion which I had so long entertained were dispelled, when at last I had learned to love that which I had despised, and to despise that which I had loved, my preserver reminded me that, after having discovered my faults, I must still merit pardon by penance.

“ I understood his meaning, and it was with joy that I began to prepare myself for a general confession of my whole life. Alas ! I had made none since my first communion, and my conscience was burdened with many sins.

“ But the devil, jealous of seeing snatched from him a victim on whom he had so long counted, made every effort to oppose my conversion by disturbing my soul. It seemed to me that my sins could not be pardoned ; the abyss which separated me from my God appeared to me impassable.

“ The crime which I had lately committed against the blood of my Saviour was the subject of most terrible anguish to me ; I seemed ever to hear the voice of that blood calling down heavenly vengeance



upon me. Soon despair took possession of my soul, and, deaf to all the words of the pious missionary, I ran into the woods like a madman, and my cries disturbed the vast solitude.

“Several times I was tempted to destroy my life, which appeared to me a heavy burden ; often I regretted having learned the truth, and returned to that belief which caused my torment. I could then compare my condition to that of the damned who have faith, but without either hope or charity ; and, since I thought myself thus reprobate, I was anxious to see my fate decided for eternity, and I wished to kill myself.

“However, God watched over me, and, when I refused to listen to the voice of his minister, the latter, prostrate at the foot of the cross, prayed for me and wept over my sufferings. At last grace prevailed, hope recovered the ascendancy, my frightened imagination was calmed, and my heart was opened anew to the sweet inspirations of the divine Spirit.

“Coming forth from this struggle, I felt myself, as it were, regenerated ; and I, who



some days before would not hear of confession, was the first to ask my benefactor to hear mine. It would be impossible to paint the joy which my return to sentiments more worthy of the mercy of my God caused him ; he pressed me to his heart with transport, and I felt his tears fall upon my face, as the prodigal son felt those of his father when the poor youth prostrated himself at his feet to confess his fault.

“ The next day after the day when I had given him this good news, I rose early, and, after remaining a long time in prayer, I went to him to make my confession. It was not long, for he already knew all my miseries ; but according as I revealed the secrets of my heart, I felt as if relieved from a heavy burden which had overpowered me.

“ I thought he would submit me to a long proof, to assure himself of the sincerity of my repentance ; he was pleased to accomplish all my desires immediately, by giving me absolution.

“ ‘ My brother,’ said he to me, ‘ you have been very ungrateful towards your God ; you have long rejected his love ; but I feel



confident that the extraordinary proofs which he has recently given of his mercy to you will not be forgotten. He has brought you to him by severe trials, because they were necessary to overcome the obstinacy with which you rejected his grace ; but now that they are passed, remember them no longer but to thank him for his mercy. He permitted your friend to die in unrepentance ; do not forget this either, that you may always live in that salutary fear which is the beginning and basis of wisdom. You are soon to return into the world, and you will be exposed anew to its criminal suggestions ; but the remembrance of the favors with which Heaven has loaded you will sustain you, and you will share with your neighbor the light which God has shed on your soul.'

"I received absolution with the feeling of joy which a criminal experiences when, in mounting the scaffold, he hears around him the cry of *pardon!* and sees himself delivered from the chains which bound him.

"Father Bernard also wished me to approach the Holy Table, but I begged him not to insist upon it. Although I was



confident that I had been restored to the grace of God, I did not yet dare to receive the Sacrament of his love. And my confessor, touched by the purity of my intentions, although my reluctance was the effect of a groundless fear, consented that I should put off my communion somewhat longer.

“After three months’ stay in the desert, I at length thought of returning to my friends. I took leave of my benefactor, being scarcely able to speak a word ; but my tears spoke for me. He also appeared deeply moved, and, embracing me, he said :

“ ‘ I will probably never see you again in this world ; but on high we will be reunited in the bosom of the Deity. Let us pray for each other, that the Lord may give us grace to deserve this happiness. Farewell ! never forget the lessons which Heaven has given you.’

“These were his last words. Escorted by two Indians, I took the road which was to conduct me to my comrades in arms, and, after several days’ march, I arrived safe and sound at their encampment.”

The details which follow were added by the priest to the manuscript of Felix’s,



the close of which we have just given. We continue the recital:

“Louis saw his friend again with a joy the greater that he thought he had lost him. In truth, all those who had escaped, like Felix, the first carnage fell some days after into ambushes which the Indians had prepared for them, and all were massacred.

“Louis soon remarked that something extraordinary had taken place in the soul of Felix since their separation, and he asked him several times the meaning of the sorrow which he saw imprinted on his features; but Felix could not make an avowal which his friend was incapable of understanding. He contented himself with answering:

“‘Pray that the Lord may open your eyes, as he has vouchsafed to open mine, and you will see that the happiness which we have sought so long was but little worthy of our ambition.’

“Tired of war, and still more wearied with the impossibility of working for the salvation of his soul in the midst of a camp, Felix wished to return to France; but Louis prayed him so earnestly to remain for some



time longer with him that he could not refuse.

“ Although he no longer took part in the war (his weakness not permitting him to expose himself so soon to new fatigues), he could not, however, prevent himself from defending his friend’s life on one occasion which Louis never forgot.

“ One day, when they were so imprudent as to stray away together from their companions, and were walking on the shore of Lake Erie, they were all at once assailed by two Indians who were hidden behind a rock. They defended themselves bravely, and Felix had the happiness of saving Louis’s life ; but he received a large wound on the forehead, and a shot had broken his right wrist.

“ ‘ Ah ! ’ said he, some days after, ‘ I should have lost my two hands, which have both served me to commit a crime ; but God has been pleased to leave me one to wipe away my tears.’

“ He was carried to the ambulance, where the wound on his head was dressed, and his hand amputated. The treatment was long, and when Felix was cured, as he



could no longer serve, he asked his discharge, and returned to France.

“His farewell to his friend cost him a great deal, for he was sincerely attached to him. At the moment of their separation, Louis once more begged Felix to tell him what had occurred during his long absence from the camp.

“‘Louis,’ answered he, ‘you see before you a great criminal, who will not have sufficient time during the rest of his life to expiate his sin. Pray for me.’

“And after embracing him with all the fervor of the most lively friendship, he departed with tearful eyes and a swelling heart.

“On his return to France, Felix sold all his goods, giving part to the poor, and consecrating the rest to the foundation and support of several religious institutions. His friends vainly united in opposing his pious projects. He resisted all their remonstrances, and when they demanded the cause of this conduct so strange to them, he gave vague answers. Only when he spoke to those whose hearts he thought capable of understanding, he said that he



















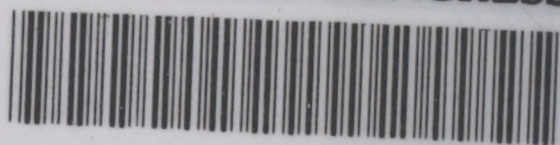








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